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ESSAYS,

CIVIL, MORAL, LITERARY AND POLITICAL,

WRITTEN

AFTER THE MANNER OF M. DE MONTAGNE;

INTERSPERSED WITH

CHARACTERS, PORTRAITS, ANECDOTES, &c.

BY THE CELEBRATED

MARQUIS D'ARGENSON,

MANY YEARS PRIME MINISTER OF FRANCE;

AND WHO WAS HONOURED WITH THE PARTICULAR INTIMACY OF THE LATE KING OF PRUSSIA.

TRANSLATED FROM HIS VALUABLE MANUSCRIPTS, AND NEVER BEFORE MADE PUBLIC.

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ESSAYS, &c.

REFLECTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

MADE FROM

READING AND EXPERIENCE:

CHARACTERS, PORTRAITS, ANECDOTES, &c.

ESSAY I.

INTRODUCTION.

I Love *Montagne*, I read him with pleaſure; not that I think always like him, but becauſe he gives me room to reflect, and to adopt a like or a contrary opinion to that of his own. Madame de *Sevigny* ſaid, when ſhe read his Eſſays, ſhe imagined ſhe was walking with him in her garden, and that they were converſing together. I think ſo likewiſe; and I find that *Montagne* appears frequently to advance propoſitions in order to bring on a little diſpute which animates converſation, and renders it more lively and intereſting: this is aſſuredly a good method of engaging the attention of the

reader. I will ſtrive to follow it, in compoſing a book as irregular, as full of looſe propoſitions, as problematical, and as full of paradoxes, as that of *Montagne*. I will treat of every thing which falls under my pen, or comes into my mind; ſpring from branch to branch, exhauſt no ſubject, and return at different times to the ſame. I wiſh my book ſhould be read, as it was compoſed, in moments of leiſure; that it ſhould be taken up and laid down at every page, but that after being ſhut, each article ſhould be reaſoned upon. I ſhall think myſelf happy, if, in the midſt of all this real or apparent diſorder, there be found in me ſome of thoſe advantages which *Montagne* enjoyed. I do not envy him his greateſt qualities, nor the ſtrokes of genius with which his book is decorated, nor the energy of his ſtyle; but I dare aſſert, that I am like himſelf, a zealous friend to truth, to humanity, and to juſtice; that I am frank and honeſt in my words, writings, and actions; that I judge impartially the age in which I live, my neighbour with mildneſs and indulgence, and myſelf with ſome caution; for we ought not to be more ſevere with ourſelves, than with others.

ESSAY II.

ON MORALITY.

MORALITY teaches us how we ought to live with men; what a number of diſcourſes, ſermons and books there are, which inſtruct us in the firſt principles of it! But there are few which teach us how to live with ourſelves, and for ourſelves alone: it is becauſe the maſter and the leſſons are in our own hearts, and depend upon our characters. There are people who have lived ſixty years without ever having known themſelves, becauſe they have never been at the trouble of ſtudying their characters; for the moſt trifling reſearch, is ſufficient to give us that knowledge to perfection. Let it not be imagined, that ſelf-love hinders us from judging truly of our own character; on the contrary, it informs us of our defects, and engages us to correct them, becauſe our happineſs is intereſted therein: it only hinders us from confeſſing them before others. Let us be ſincere, we may be deceived about our defects, but we cannot totally conceal them.

ESSAY III.

ON IMAGINATION.

THE imagination is a quality of the ſoul, not only a brilliant but an happy one, for it is more frequently the cauſe of our happineſs, than of our miſery; it preſents us with more pleaſures than vexations, with more hopes than fears. Men of dull and heavy diſpoſitions, who are not affected by any thing, vegetate and paſs their lives in a kind of tranquillity, but without pleaſure or delight; like animals which ſee, feel and taſte nothing but that which is under their eyes, paws, or teeth; but the imagination, which is proper to man, tranſports us beyond ourſelves, and makes us taſte future and the moſt diſtant pleaſures. Let us not be told, that it makes us alſo foreſee evils, pains and accidents, which will perhaps never arrive: it is ſeldom that imagination carries us to theſe panic fears, unleſs it be deranged by phyſical cauſes. The ſick man ſees dark phantoms, and has melancholy ideas;

ideas; the man in health has no dreams but ſuch as are agreeable, and as we are more frequently in a good, than a bad ſtate of health, our natural ſtate is to deſire, to hope, and to enjoy. It is true, that the imagination, which gives us ſome agreeable moments, expoſes us, when once we are undeceived, to others which are painful. There is no perſon who does not wiſh to preſerve his life, his health, and his property; but the imagination repreſents to us our life, as a thing which ought to be very long; our health eſtabliſhed and unchangeable; and our fortune inexhauſtible: when the two latter of theſe illuſions ceaſe before the former, we are much to be pitied.

ESSAY IV.

ON COMPARISON.

WE cannot judge well but by compariſon; and we cannot compare metaphyſical objects, (that is, thoſe which fall not under the ſenſes) but by reflecting upon ourſelves, and by comparing the ſentiments of others with our own. From hence it comes to paſs, that the firſt ſentiment of an honeſt man, inclines him to believe that men in general are honeſt; and that of a vicious man, to believe that all the world is ill diſpoſed. Nothing but experience, knowledge of the world, of men, and of things, can bring us to a juſt manner of thinking in this reſpect; and ſtill the different conjunctures, by which we may happen to be modified, conſiderably bias our judgment therein. In general, the beſt manner of judging men, is according to their intereſts; and the beſt method of perſuading them, is to let them perceive how much it is their intereſt to do that which is propoſed. It is not ſo

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eaſy to deceive them as may be imagined; thoſe who wiſh to ſucceed therein, muſt give them no time for reflection.

I have read in the works of St. Evremond, a paſſage which appeared to me, equally agreeable and natural: "I wiſhed, "ſaid he, to write characteriſtic Tragedies "and Comedies; but I have never been able "to place my heroes in other ſituations "than thoſe in which I was myſelf; nor to "give them other characters than my own: "it was in vain that I gave to my perſon- "ages, Greek, Roman, Turkiſh, or French, "dreſſes, or that I called them by names "taken from the hiſtories of all thoſe "countries; when my piece was finiſhed, "I perceived always that I had repreſented "nobody but St. Evremond."

ESSAY V.

ON THE PRACTICE OF MORALITY.

THE Chineſe are perſuaded that there is but one ſcience which merits to be profoundly ſtudied, and that it is neceſſary to ſtudy it one's whole life; it is morality: from this reſults, ſay our relations of them, that all the Chineſe are philoſophers. I maintain, that theſe relations are not authentic; it is neither true nor poſſible that they ſhould be ſo; and I ſhould greatly pity a people, who paſſed their whole lives in the ſtudy of morality. The firſt year of their ſtudies, they would know every thing neceſſary to be known; and when men obſtinately purſue the ſtudy of a thing, which they poſſeſs in the moſt ample manner, they terminate in perplexity. What we ought to do during our lives, is not to ſtudy morality, but to practiſe it; it may be very well practiſed without being underſtood, when we ſuffer ourſelves to be conducted by thoſe who know what it is; and much

much more ſo, when we are penetrated by its principles which are few in number, but univerſally acknowledged, for ſuch a length of time paſt, to be good, that there is nothing more ſolid. Afterwards, it is neceſſary to apply them on every occaſion; and to oppoſe them to the fire of the paſſions, and to the trifling intereſts, which incline us to deviate from our duty. There are profeſſions in routine of which it may be ſaid, in parodying a verſe of Boileau; *The practice is eaſy, and the art is difficult.* It is quite the contrary in morality; the knowledge of its principles is ſimple and eaſy; but the practice is a difficulty which we experience every day.

It is not the vivacity only of our paſſions, of our character, and our age, which cauſes obſtacles to the practice of morality, but circumſtances alſo, difficult to be foreſeen. However, *at all events the wiſe man is prepared.* It is particularly neceſſary when we are young, to reflect upon what we read and ſee; to put ourſelves in the place of people whom we hear ſpeak, or whom we know perſonally, and aſk ourſelves, what would we

we do were we in alike ſituation? This is what is called ſtudying hiſtorical books, and the great book of the world to advantage. I have for more than twenty years followed this method, and I am of opinion, that I am the better for it. Without ambition, or any ardent deſire of changing my preſent ſituation, I like, notwithſtanding, to build *caſtles in the air:* they amuſe me and give me no uneaſineſs: they are agreeable dreams which never make me ſtart out of ſleep, or give me the night-mare. My friend the Abbé de Saint Pierre, dreams continually that he is reforming the ſtate: I have a little more right than he has to form ſuch dreams. He writes and publiſhes what he dreams of; I am tempted to do ſo likewiſe; but I anſwer for it, that my dreams ſhall not be brought to light during my exiſtence; firſt, becauſe I do not believe the world diſpoſed to make uſe of that which I think is for its advantage; ſecondly, becauſe the example of the Abbé de St. Pierre frightens me. With the beſt intentions, he has given much advice which would well deſerve to be followed; but he has attacked in front, generally received ideas; he has propoſed impracticable

able means of arriving at happy ends; he has announced his ideas in an emphatical tone; and has believed that to be well expreſſed, they have need of new words and an extraordinary orthography; all this has thrown a ridicule upon his writings, and perſon; and it was only by paſſing for a fool and a dotard, that he avoided the hatred of thoſe whoſe intereſt it was to maintain the abuſes which he was willing to deſtroy. It cannot be denied, that he merited, in ſeveral reſpects, reproaches, and even deriſion; but aſſuredly it was poſſible to reap ſome advantage from his ideas upon ſeveral objects, and to turn to a good account his idle ſpeculations. A fine example for thoſe who would ſtill wiſh to publiſh projects of reform: but ought this to frighten a good citizen? No! at leaſt, it will not hinder me from thinking, and even writing, were it but for myſelf, that which ſhall appear to me beſt to be done.

ESSAY

ESSAY VI.

ON IMAGINARY IDEAS.

THERE are chimeras which elevate the ſoul, and incline the mind to fortify itſelf with great and noble ideas; when a man believes himſelf deſtined to do great things, he is never guilty of a mean action; he conceives no low projects, or any of which he is aſhamed. A young officer, who aſpires to the command of an army, ſtrives to improve himſelf in tactics; he ſtudies the great art of war, and if he does not become a general, he ſucceeds at leaſt ſo far as to command a troop or a detachment. A young magiſtrate, who thinks he has ſenſe and abilities enough to attain the height of his profeſſion, applies himſelf ſeriouſly to gain information, and ſtrives at the ſame time to render himſelf agreeable to protectors in power; if he arrives not entirely at the end he propoſes, he reaps at leaſt, a part of the fruit of his labour and hopes. The young clerk in a court of juſtice, who has ſeen a

few

few celebrated advocates make great fortunes; the ſtudent in anatomy, who has ſeen the firſt ſurgeon to the King die and leave upwards of an hundred thouſand pounds; the apprentice, who has ſeen the ſhop of his maſter ſo well accuſtomed, that there was annually ſold therein, merchandiſe to the amount of forty thouſand pounds; all theſe people are completely happy, if they have a hope, frequently chimerical of doing the ſame thing. The deſire of ſucceeding, the conviction even that we ſhall ſucceed, the enthuſiaſm of our profeſſion, or calling, are powerful incentives, which ſtimulate us to great actions. We muſt not be diſheartened; we muſt indulge hope, give an inceſſant application, and not ceaſe to merit new recompenſes, till we have obtained all that we can deſire. There are none but fools, who after having made trifling efforts, and given ſome feeble proofs of their abilities, wait quietly by their fire-ſide for honour and the price of their ſervices, and complain of the injuries they have ſuffered. Whoever has not the courage to ſuffer many, does not merit to be in the end recompenſed by a brilliant ſucceſs.

If

If we have not the noble emulation of riſing above our equals, we muſt confine ourſelves to peaceful and ſocial virtues, and uſe with diſcretion the fortune we have received from our fathers, if we be not willing to augment it; we ſhould make ourſelves loved in our families, eſteemed in the neighbourhood, and enjoy the pleaſures of a limited ſociety.

ESSAY VII.

ON CHARACTERISTIC MODELS FOR IMITATION.

A Wiſe and juſt man looks upon every diſhoneſt means of enriching himſelf as impoſſible; and upon every project which he is unable to accompliſh, as a real folly; but even in the laſt caſe he may careſs chimeras, and amuſe himſelf with them, as we read a romance, without hoping to become the hero of it; or relations of voyages, without having the leaſt inclination to go to ſea, and leave our native country. It is in this manner that I put myſelf, ſometimes in the place of thoſe whoſe hiſtory I read; I figure to my mind the ſituations they have been in, and aſk myſelf if I ſhould have got as happily out of them as they did? Were I a king, I ſometimes ſay, ſhould ſuch a prince be my model? Were I a general of an army, ſhould I conduct myſelf like ſuch or ſuch a famous warrior? If I were a miniſter or a magiſtrate, ſhould I adopt the princi-

ples which certain perſons in thoſe ſituations of my acquaintance appear to have followed? As I love to write what I think, eſpecially when I preſume that I can do it with advantage, I have made an infinity of notes from what I have read; and from converſations with people who were or are of great conſideration in the world, and with whom I have been intimately connected; I mean to make uſe of theſe notes in order to fill up this volume.

I have frequently ſought, among my acquaintance, ſome perſon who might ſerve me for a model; but I have not yet found one which is perfect, and to whom I could wholly attach myſelf. The more particularly I have known the people I would fain have imitated, the more I was convinced that they were in many points far from that degree of perfection to which I was ſtudious to arrive. Finally, I perceived that I ought to imitate Praxiteles, who, wiſhing to make his Venus a real *chef d'œuvre*, did not confine himſelf to a ſingle beauty. Although there were charming girls in Athens, and that he had Phryne before his eyes, he choſe

choſe in a number, that which each of them had in the greateſt perfection, and made of ſo many united attractions, a ſtatue, which has been judged to be the fineſt piece of workmanſhip produced by the hands of man.

Beſides, if even I found models capable of ſatisfying me, and if I were abſolutely in their ſituation, I ſhould carefully avoid copying them ſervilely: a copyiſt is in a ſubaltern and abject ſtate, however excellent may be the original. A free and noble imitation is alone worthy of a man, who feels elevated, and believes that he has ſome genius.

ESSAY VIII.

ON THE UTILITY OF PLUTARCH's LIVES.

THE lives of Plutarch, if read attentively, are of all thoſe of ancient authors, the moſt capable of engaging young perſons to make reflections; and for which reaſon they ſeldom fail to do it: they would wiſh to be alternately Ariſtides, Lucullus, Scipio, Alcibiades, or Socrates; but independently that ſuch ideas paſs very rapidly, theſe perſonages lived in an age and a country ſo different from ours, that there are not many applications to be made of our manner of thinking and acting to theirs. The parallels even that Plutarch ſtrove to make of the Greeks and the Romans, are neither very juſt nor uſeful; becauſe there was already too great a difference between the manners of the two nations, and the ſituations of their heroes. Nevertheleſs, we of the eighteenth century may reap ſome benefit, by conſidering theſe people dead, two thouſand

ſand years ago, at three thouſand five hundred leagues diſtance from us.

If I had a model in antiquity to follow, it ſhould be *Julius Agricola*, father-in-law of Tacitus. In ſuppoſing that his ſon-in-law has not over charged his portrait, this great man has given the example of an individual, who, after having ſerved his country with honour, uprightneſs and diſintereſtedneſs, in the higheſt degree poſſible, finding himſelf obliged to renounce the ſatisfaction of being uſeful to the public, devoted himſelf to the exerciſe of ſocial virtues; made his family and a ſociety of choſen friends happy, in the midſt of which he was ſolely concentred; and ſighed in ſecret, becauſe he was perſuaded, that to cry aloud againſt the evils which he could not remedy, was to encreaſe them. My ſon, to whom I have communicated my manner of thinking with reſpect to Agricola, is of a different opinion; he has found in ancient hiſtory, other perſonages more worthy of being taken for models, and I excuſe him on account of his youth and ſituation. He is juſt beginning his career, and mine is perhaps already too

ſar advanced; before we think of going to bed, it is neceſſary at leaſt to have dined.

I ſhall never forget ſome paſſages of *Tacitus* in the life of *Agricola* his father in-law: I will tranſcribe them in my own language, for I am of opinion, that they have not yet been tranſlated in ſuch a manner as they deſerve.

* " Agricola being young, was exceſſive-
" ly fond of ſtudy; perhaps more ſo than
" a man deſtined to a military life and
" public affairs ought to be: but his mo-
" ther regulated his ſoaring inclination by
" ſciences and letters. Afterwards, age and
" reflection moderated his ardor, and gave
" him that juſtneſs of taſte for philoſophy,
" which is proper for a Stateſman.

The

* The reader will be pleaſed to conſider, that this paſſage from Tacitus comes into Engliſh from the French of M. d' Argenſon. M. d'Argenſon being of opinion, that no good tranſlation of it had ever been given, the tranſlator choſe in this caſe, rather to make M. d'Argenſon his original than Tacitus.

" The people, whom he was charged to " govern, did not remark in his conduct " either humour, arrogance, or avarice: " he was moderate and reaſonable; and what " is exceedingly rare, his goodneſs loſt him " none of the people's reſpect, nor his " ſeverity their affection. Although he was " obliged to increaſe the contribututions, " in order to provide for the ſubſiſtance of " his army, he made them ſupportable by " an equitable diviſion, and ſuppreſſed vex- " atious proſecutions, which bear heavier " upon the people than even impoſitions.

" Being returned home, after having " filled the moſt honourable functions, he " ſtrove by the moſt ſimple and modeſt ex- " terior appearance, to make his great name " and actions to be forgotten. He exerciſed " himſelf in the practice of private virtues, " in the boſom of his family and among his " friends; many people on ſeeing *Agricola*, " ſought in him the great man, and few " diſcovered him at firſt ſight.

" The affairs of the Empire becoming " worſe, the public voice called *Agricola*

" to his country's aſſiſtance; theſe cries " ſtruck inceſſantly the ears of the Emperor. " Some perſons communicated them to him " by way of advice; others repeated them " through malignity, and with a view of " irritating the prince againſt a man whom " they had already unjuſtly ſlandered. It " was thus that the virtues of *Agricola* con- " curred equally in loading him with ho- " nour, and precipitating his ruin.

" *Agricola* was eaſy about the fate which " hung over him; he did not brave the " power of *Domitian*, and feared as little " the evil he was capable of doing him; " he ſighed for the fate of his country " only, and this he did in ſecret. Let us " learn by his example, that there is a kind " of particular heroiſm for thoſe who live " under the empire of tyrants: it conſiſts " in not precipitating ourſelves fooliſhly " into uſeleſs dangers, but in preparing our- " ſelves to ſupport every accident to which " we are expoſed under bad princes.

" If poſterity wiſh to know ſomething " of the perſon of *Agricola*, he was rather pro-

" proportionably formed than of a graceful
" figure; his phyſiognomy inſpired con-
" fidence; his air was rather affable and
" polite than impoſing; it was ſufficient to
" look at him, to know that he was an
" honeſt man; and people were not aſto-
" niſhed when they diſcovered that he was
" a great man. His career was not very
" long, if the ordinary courſe of life be
" conſidered, as he died at the age of fifty
" years; but on examining the uſe he made
" of his time, he lived to a great age. Ho-
" noured with the conſulate, and inveſted
" with the triumphal robe, he had no other
" honour to deſire; without being very
" rich, he was ſufficiently ſo to ſupport his
" rank. He preſerved till his death, his
" virtues, his reputation, the affections of
" his relations and friends, and the eſteem
" of the public: finally it may be ſaid, that
" he gained happily a good port at the eve
" of ſtorms and tempeſts."

ESSAY IX.

CHARACTER OF AGRICOLA AND POMPONIUS ATTICUS.

IF I was pleaſed with the life of *Agricola*, and wiſhed to take him for my model, my ſon was as much ſo with the life of *Pomponius Atticus*, which I made him read in *Cornelius Nepos*. He came to tell me, that the conduct of this wiſe Roman was that which he would imitate: my reply to him was as follows: "You do not yet, my ſon, "perceive the difficulty there is in living "as happily as *Pomponius Atticus* did, in "ſuch critical circumſtances. You do not "conceive the danger there is in taking no "part in civil wars. Can a man flatter "himſelf with the idea of being equally "eſteemed by both parties, to have friends "in one and the other, to render ſervice to "all, and not to be ſuſpected by any? It is "almoſt impoſſible, when a perſon poſſeſſes rank

" rank in life, and pretends to ſome con-
" ſideration, to act ſuch a part. To
" meddle with nothing, is all that the ig-
" norant and obſcure can do, and in thanking
" heaven for their inſignificance; but others
" are obliged to explain themſelves: I am
" firmly of opinion, that it is their duty to
" make known their manner of thinking,
" when they have employment which re-
" quire they ſhould do it; and when they
" can contribute to ſupport the lawful party
" and reſiſt the unlawful one. I am per-
" ſuaded that *Atticus* was blamed, that he
" was accuſed of indifference and apathy:
" *Cornelius Nepos* ſays ſomething of it; it
" was aſſerted, and perhaps with truth,
" that he made his court to the tyrants;
" but that which ſaved *Atticus*, was the
" conſtant equality of his philoſophy; it
" did not change for a moment; and not
" the leaſt word eſcaped him, either againſt
" *Sylla*, in favour of *Brutus*, or againſt
" *Marc Antony*. He died at ſeventy-ſeven
" years of age, the friend of *Auguſtus*; al-
" though he had calmly ſeen *Cæſar* aſſaſſin-
" ated in a full ſenate, he had no part in
" the

" the conſpiracy, but on the other hand he
" took no means to revenge his death.*

" Ah! my ſon, it is carrying indifference to a culpable degree! Moreover, dare you flatter yourſelf with being like *Atticus*, ſo amiable as to be equally ſought after by both parties? Either it is neceſſary to be abſolutely innocent, or to have ſuch fine qualities as are capable of making trifling errors to be forgotten. For my part, I avow that I do not believe I am capable of conducting myſelf like *Pomponius Atticus*. If I were unfortunate enough to live at a time when my country was divided into two parties, I think I could not do otherwiſe than declare myſelf in favour of the beſt; eſpecially if I were powerful, rich, and young enough to be of ſervice to it.

* Pomponius Atticus did what was ſtill worſe; Cicero, his intimate friend, who wrote him ſo many fine letters, whoſe brother was his ſon in law, was proſcribed and aſſaſſinated by order of Antony. Fulvia, wife of this Triumvir, cauſed the head of Cicero to be brought to her, tore out the tongue, which had pronounced the Philippics, and by a refinement of barbarity, pierced it ſeveral times with her needle. Pomponius Atticus was not only unconcerned at this, but ſometime afterwards, Fulvia being embarraſſed in her circumſtances, having loſt her huſband, he protected her, did her eſſential ſervices, and declared himſelf her ſteadfaſt friend.

ESSAY X.

COMPARISON OF LYCURGUS AND ST. FRANCIS D'ASSISE.

IN reading the life of *Lycurgus*, in Plutarch, and the hiſtory of Lacedemon, I could not but call to mind an odd compariſon, and without doubt ridiculous, which I have ſomewhere read; it is a well drawn and very droll parallel, between *Lycurgus* and *Saint Francis D'Aſſiſe*. The principles of theſe two legiſlators are, it is ſaid, the ſame; the Lacedemonians made vows like the capuchin friars; namely 1ſt, that of poverty, or at leaſt *diſappropriation*, ſince they held all their property in common, lands, proviſions, buildings and cloaths; gold and ſilver were forbidden them; if there were any at Lacedemon, they belonged to the State.—2d. With reſpect to the vow of obedience, it was no where better obſerved than in Sparta; the

the ſoldier was kept in the moſt exact diſcipline; the people had no part in the government; it was compoſed of monarchy and ariſtocracy: the kings repreſented the provincial and the guardian,† the ephori the definitor. 3d. It is not ſo eaſy to prove, that the Lacedemonians made a vow of chaſtity; for it is well known they had uſages and cuſtoms quite contrary: but the principal object of the inſtitutors of orders, and by which they bound each member of a religious ſociety, and that of the Latin church, (which ſubjected in like manner all its prieſts) was to take away the right of inheritance, and to concentre, or rather extend in general ſociety, the intereſt divided otherwiſe among families.

Such was the ſpirit of the laws of *Lycurgus*, as well as that of *Saint Francis*: men forget on entering into that order, their fathers and mothers; they abjure the ties of conſanguinity; they are not even attached to any

† Officers or inſpectors belonging to the order of Saint Francis.

any particular convent; they are cosmopolites as far as the world of *Saint Francis* reaches. The spirit of the institutions of *Lycurgus* is lost, like that of the rules of the Saint; every thing becomes corrupted, and is in the end destroyed, and generally by the same causes.

The Lacedemonians found their manner of living too austere; they envied their neighbours the agreeable life they enjoyed, and thought that having conquered them, they ought like them, to enjoy their riches. In like manner, the Monks having made themselves respected, admired, and esteemed, thought to take advantage of the consideration they had in the world, in order to enrich, if not their persons, at least their monasteries. The mendicants even are become rich and proprietors. Philosophy, sciences and arts, which produce ease and convenience, corrupted Athens, and ruined Lacedemon; so the Cordeliers have been admitted into the University of Paris, and have there canvassed for the honours of doctorship: no means are left of reconciling

these

theſe fine titles with the very auſtere life they ought to lead, and the extreme poverty of which they have made profeſſion. Different reforms have been in vain attempted to reduce the monks to their firſt inſtitution. Finally, having quite loſt the virtues of their order, it is eaſy to foreſee, that in a little time there will be no more monks than Spartans.

ESSAY XI.

PORTRAITS OF ARISTIDES, AND ALCIBIADES.

I Have juſt read with the greateſt pleaſure, in Plutarch, the two lives and portraits of *Ariſtides*, and *Alcibiades*: theſe two illuſtrious Athenians form a perfect contraſt; but their characters are equally worth ſtudying, and it is even uſeful to compare them, and to make of their different kinds of merit, application to the age in which we live.

The renown of arms was not that of *Ariſtides*:—he ſerved in the army, at firſt as a private ſoldier, or ſubaltern officer:—he conducted himſelf bravely, as every good citizen charged, as far as is in his power, with the defence of his country, ought to do; but he was not ambitious of commanding, and ſerved his fellow citizens better with his head than with his arms. Always modeſt; contented to ſhew his talents when he was charged with the execution of any parti-

particular duty, or conſulted upon any affair; he ceded the honour of rank to him who wiſhed to poſſeſs it; nevertheleſs, he could not ſo far hide his merit as to prevent its being juſtly admired. Eſchylus having introduced into one of his tragedies the following Greek verſes,—"*He will not appear juſt, but he will be ſo.*" The people turned towards Ariſtides, diſcovered in him this character, and immediately gave their applauſe. The public eſteem met him, if the expreſſion may be allowed, and accompanied him, without his ever ſeeking for it. He had a violent enemy, and ſo much the more dangerous, as he was a perſon of no mean conſideration: this was *Themiſtocles.* He made it a rule to contradict every thing which Ariſtides propoſed; and Ariſtides took the reſolution of getting others to propoſe that which he thought advantageous to the Republic. Notwithſtanding all his merit, we know that Ariſtides could not ſave himſelf from the rigour of the oſtraciſm; a ſevere law, introduced into the Republic of Athens, with the view of maintaining equality. His great reputation of juſtice and underſtanding gave umbrage to his fellow citizens:

citizens: he went into exile, praying that Athens might never be in a ſituation to regret his abſence. His prayers were not heard:—Ariſtides was ſoon wanted, and recalled. Themiſtocles, like a great politician, went to meet him, and promiſed him every kind of deference and proofs of attachment. Ariſtides, more ſincere in his profeſſions, anſwered: "Command me in war,—you "are a great general,—I will obey you "like a brave officer. When we ſhall be "returned to Athens, let each of us take "in the deliberations, that part which his "ideas ſhall ſuggeſt." In ſhort, the year following, Themiſtocles conceived a bold and brilliant project, which might ſucceed; yet it was not quite conformable to the rules of juſtice: the people conſulted Ariſtides upon it, he told them freely what he thought; and the Athenians rejected it. So true it is, that the people, when they have time to reflect, and are temperate, conduct themſelves in the moſt juſt and upright manner. The virtue and reaſon of Ariſtides made an epocha; and when the morals of Greece were become totally corrupted, *the time of Ariſtides* was quoted, in order to re-

fer to the age of upright men. During the reign of the Emperors at Rome, *the age of Cato* was likewiſe ſpoken of, in referring to the time when this Cenſor defended the laws and ancient cuſtoms of the Roman Republic; but Cato was uncouth and auſtere,—Ariſtides gentle and humane.* Another Athenian, endowed with more brilliant qualities than Ariſtides, enjoyed during his life, and even a long time after his death, the greateſt reputation; this was *Alcibiades*, whoſe character, &c. I will extract, as I have done that of Ariſtides from Plutarch.

* It does not appear that Ariſtides either ſtudied philoſophy, or that he aſſociated with philoſophers; the Academy and the Lyceum, were not eſtabliſhed at the time in which he lived; philoſophy was natural to him, and not acquired: his juſtice was founded upon the virtue of his mind, and the uprightneſs of his heart.

Since the death of Ariſtides, there have, perhaps, been many men, who, born with as much virtue, rectitude of mind and heart as he was, have perverted theſe happy gifts, by ſtudying to reaſon too profoundly upon the nature and extent of their duties, and by comparing them with their intereſts.

ESSAY

ESSAY XII.

CHARACTER OF ALCIBIADES.

ALCIBIADES gave in his youth proofs of what he was one day to become: he was courageous, intrepid, ambitious, haughty, and predominant; but knowing, on great occaſions, how to temper his paſſions by policy;—witty, lively, full of grace and agreeableneſs, but having an appearance of being diſſipated and imprudent: of a charming figure, made to inſpire love, which in effect he did, appearing to return all the ſentiments he cauſed in others; but he was too much maſter of his paſſions to be governed by them. He made his unreſtrained ardour for pleaſure ſubſervient to his reputation, ambition and intereſts. Fond of wealth, although rich, and ſometimes thought extravagant. He cultivated the arts, and gleaned from the belles lettres, juſt enough to make him amiable: he ſtudied philoſophy: Socrates, the wiſeſt of men, was his maſter, and ſo well pleaſed in giv-

ing him leſſons, that in another ſenſe, Alcibiades was the maſter of Socrates He was married, and not very faithful to his wife (Hipparete;) ſhe imitated thoſe who had upon Alcibiades leſs legal rights, and pardoned his inconſtancy and errors on account of his agreeable qualities. Every talent was natural to him, as the virtues were to Ariſtides; therefore, he knew in caſe of need, how to counterfeit all that Ariſtides really practiſed. Particular circumſtances were the cauſe of his going to Lacedemon: and in that city, the rival of his country, and whoſe manners formed a perfect contraſt with thoſe of the Athenians, he appeared for ſometime to become a perfect Spartan; but he was only a fox cloathed in the ſkin of a lion. He had metamorphoſed his exterior only: he ſeduced the wife of the good King Agis; and ſo far from the Spartans converting him, it was he who corrupted them. He went among the Perſians, and appeared to be born to live in the court of a deſpotic King. A pliant courtier, he cringed at the feet of him who was maſter: daring and haughty towards the Satraps, he proved to them that he had as much or more

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right than they had to favour, and to all the advantages which men acquire in a monarchy; after his return to his own country, he dazzled his fellow citizens with his magnificence; but he delighted them with the taſte he introduced into the feaſts which he gave them. The Athenians were capable of pardoning every thing in favour of the graces: nobody had this reſource more at hand than Alcibiades. His end was tragical; but he proved to his lateſt moment that he was intrepid: beſieged in his houſe by the Perſians, covered with their arrows, he expired; and it was the beautiful Timandra who cloſed his eyes, and took care of his interment.

After having read theſe portraits, and turning our eyes towards the age and country in which we live, we cannot but diſcover that we have ſtill ſome ſimilar to Alcibiades, but none to Ariſtides. The 16th century produced a few of them, and they were acknowledged to be ſuch; becauſe in time of diſorder and civil war, men who have as much firmneſs as virtue, who have principles, and who are obliged to defend them,

ſhew themſelves without diſguiſe; but when every thing ſeems calm and peaceful, valour ſleeps, and heroic virtue ſhines forth no longer. In countries where there are neither lions nor dragons, who knows if there be men that would be capable of taming them; but where no monſters are ſeen, inſects are in ſwarms; which it is more difficult to diſperſe, than to kill ferocious animals.

Our age is capable of producing men like Alcibiades.—Are there among us any perfect copies of this brilliant model? If I be not deceived, I know one of them among my cotemporaries: may my great grand children admire and love him as I do!

ESSAY XIII.

THE ELOQUENCE AND CHARACTER OF DEMOSTHENES.

I READ the harangues of Demoſthenes with all poſſible pleaſure, and his life with pain. I ſaw in him a man of the greateſt abilities, and the fineſt and moſt lively eloquence; but I perceived that the qualities of his heart did not anſwer to thoſe of his underſtanding. The firſt time he mounted the roſtrum, it was to plead againſt his guardians; he did not ſucceed, becauſe he accumulated too many arguments one upon the other; overcharged his pleading with oratorical figures, and had a bad delivery. For my part, I think his cauſe was not a good one: a young man like Demoſthenes, ought to have found his judges diſpoſed to hearken to him, when he complained, that advantage had been taken of his weakneſs to deprive him of his property. It appears that, far from being diſheartened by this bad ſucceſs, Demoſthenes

took infinite pains to become more able and ſeducing. Sometime after, not having yet obtained a good delivery, he compoſed for others; and in a cauſe wherein the Areopagites were greatly embarraſſed, becauſe the pleading on both ſides were of equal force, it was diſcovered, that Demoſthenes had drawn up both the one and the other: he was thus an advocate for and againſt. What opinion can we have of the heart of ſuch an orator! At length he found himſelf capable of oppoſing every thing which Phocion propoſed, who wanted neither wit nor eloquence, and whoſe opinions were more juſt and of greater advantage to the Athenians. Demoſthenes had talents ſtill greater than thoſe of Phocion; he got the better of him, and his ſucceſſes were the cauſe of the loſs of his country. Ought he not to reproach himſelf with ſuch a triumph? When Demoſthenes wanted argument and reaſon, it frequently happened, that he got rid of his embarraſsment by pleaſantry. This kind of reſource would appear leſs extraordinary and difficult to the French to make uſe of, than to other nations.

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His advice was to go to war, although the Athenians were not in a ſituation to do it; it was however reſolved upon. Obliged like others to join the army, he was the firſt who ſhrunk from his duty and ran away. He had harangued like bad citizen, and he fought like a cowardly ſoldier. Nevertheleſs the Athenians recalled him to the roſtrum, they wiſhed to hear again this divine orator. Frivolous people! who admired nothing but the choice of words and turn of phraſes, without giving themſelves the leaſt trouble about the object of the diſcourſe. It was, however, the welfare of the republic which was in queſtion. Philip being dead, Demoſthenes maintained, that nothing was to be feared from the young Alexander; that he was only *a fooliſh boy*, (according to the expreſſion of M. de Toureil.) The wits of Athens ſmiled, and gave their applauſe: it appeared by what followed, how far this judgment of Alexander was founded on truth. The King of Macedon deſtroyed Thebes, and forgave Athens, on account only of the arts,—of letters and philoſophy; but he required that the orators who had inſulted him ſhould be given up. Demoſthenes

thenes was the moſt culpable; he was greatly afraid, and did what he could to ſave himſelf the trouble of the journey: he invented, and declaimed wonderfully, on the fable of the ſhepherds, whom the wolves prayed to to give up their dogs. Demoſthenes was by no means a man precious to his republic; yet he managed ſo as to prevail upon his countrymen to pay a conſiderable ſum, rather than abandon him to the reſentment of the King of Macedonia. Alexander took the money from the Athenians, left them their orator, and made a very good bargain.

The Conqueror having taken Sardes from the King of Perſia, found proofs that Demoſthenes was penſioned by the enemies of his country.—in a word, a traitor. He made this known to the Athenians, who only laughed at it: in fact, it did not hinder Demoſthenes from being the beſt ſpeaker in Greece; and the Athenians pardoned every thing in favour of wit and abilities.

He was one day to plead againſt a certain Harpalus, whom the Athenians wiſhed to baniſh from their city, and who fully de-

ſerved it: the culprit gave an elegant gold cup to the orator. The next day, Demoſthenes declared that he had a cold, and could not plead: I believe it, ſaid Phocion, thou haſt got in thy throat the cup of Harpalus. This repartee was thought an excellent one; but it was all that paſſed upon the ſubject.

When we read Demoſthenes, we are ſo delighted, that we do not think of weighing his reaſons; but, on reading hiſtory, their weakneſs is ſeen, in putting ourſelves in the place of the Athenians. Phocion, on the contrary, ſpoke rationally, and always to the purpoſe. Hyperides ſaid to Phocion, when wilt thou then think of going to war? "When thoſe in years, anſwered the ſage "Athenian, ſhall know how to command, "and the young how to obey: when the "rich ſhall be diſpoſed to contribute their "property, and the poor their arms. When "orators ſhall no longer diſplay their wit "and talents at the expence of the repub-"lic!!" Theſe are ſublime ſentiments, and which preſent at once, the evils and their remedies.

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Demoſthenes, on the contrary, began his harangues, by ſaying, "Athenians, the "Oracle of Delphi, has declared, that there "was one man in Athens, who was of a "different opinion from all the others; are "you deſirous to know this man?—I am "he." This is certainly a fine rhetorical figure; but afterwards, Demoſthenes was obliged to uſe great ſubtility, to prove that he was right, in being of an opinion different from that of all his fellow citizens.—How could the Athenians have been ſo far impoſed upon, as to ſeize that which was falſe, and never that which was true? It is certain, that Demoſthenes deceived them.

I like Cicero much better; every thing in his pleadings breathes ſentiment, equity, and a juſtneſs of mind: his logic is clear, and at the ſame time preſſing. It ſeems by his manner, as if one honeſt man was defending another; and nothing proves to us that Cicero ſtrove to deceive the Romans, nor that he ſupported a bad cauſe.

The Roman orator had great perſonal defects; he was weak in council and in government

vernment, and gave way to times and circumſtances; but he was not ſtrenuous for the bad party, and if he had not the courage to ſave his country from falling, he did not lead it to the brink of the precipice. He was vain, and believed that he had ſaved Rome, by diſcovering the conſpiracy of Catiline; but if he boaſted too much of a trifling ſervice, he had nothing to reproach himſelf with. Something ſhould be granted in favour of humanity, and ſeveral weakneſſes ought to be excuſed on its account.

ESSAY

ESSAY XIV.

CHARACTERS OF THE TWO CATOS, COMPARED.

I Have read the lives of the two Catos with an intention of judging to which of them the expreſſion, afterwards a proverb, *He is as wiſe as Cato*, was moſt applicable: and I think Cato of Utica, ought to be preferred to his grandfather. In order to form a better judgment, let us compare their actions, conſidering at the ſame time, their reſpective ſituations. The Cenſor was more auſtere, and lived at a time when it was leſs neceſſary to be ſo: conſequently, his auſterity might be ſuſpected of proceeding from a particular turn of mind. He gained at firſt, ſome reputation as an orator; but it was becauſe he was very violent in his pleadings againſt the adverſe parties: ſhewed an exceſſive zeal for virtue and the laws, and criticiſed ſeverely, thoſe who acted contrary to either. He was named Queſtor, in the army of Scipio Africanus; and diſapproved

approved of the moſt trifling recompence, which that General wiſhed to make to his ſoldiers. Scipio very juſtly obſerved, he thought himſelf more reſponſible for the ſucceſs of the great enterprizes with which he was charged, than the œconomy of the public treaſure: Cato fell into a paſſion, and abandoned both the Queſtorſhip and the army. When he was Prætor, he was a judge of the moſt perfect integrity; but his ſeverity was inſupportable. Arrived at the honours of the Conſulſhip, he was ſent into Spain, where he ſoon found himſelf ſurrounded with enemies, which he owed, perhaps to the ſtubbornneſs of his character. Perceiving that it was neceſſary to relax from his ſeverity, he took out from the public treaſure two hundred talents, with which he corrupted part of the Spaniards, and oppoſing them to each other, conquered them all; razed the walls of their cities, and received in Rome triumphal honours. After having been ten years Conſul, he ſolicited the Cenſorſhip, which he obtained: and never was that place filled with ſo much intrepidity and rigour as by Cato. He paid no reſpect to perſons, Senators, Knights, or

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men of Conſular dignity: he drove from the ſenate thoſe whom he found culpable, of whatever birth they were. He was exact, ſevere, incorruptible, inflexible and reſolute: he made himſelf dreaded by thoſe who infringed the laws; but he did not render the execution of them eaſy:—he took no pains to make them eſteemed, and never thought of rewarding thoſe who conformed to what they preſcribed. He declared war againſt luxury, not by publiſhing any ſumptuary law, but by taxing the citizens according to their expences; without paying the leaſt attention to their real fortunes. At the end of his Cenſorſhip a ſtatue was erected to him, and he received the ſur-name of Cenſor, which he bore the remainder of his life; and preſerved the inclination of cenſuring and criticiſing his countrymen. He made it a duty, and perhaps a pleaſure, to accuſe them in open ſenate: this was repaid him,—he was accuſed in his turn,—and it happened, that he was more than once condemned to pay a fine. He was already advanced in age, when the Athenians came to Rome, and made it the faſhion to ſtudy the literature and philoſophy of Greece. Cato

diſapproved of this ſtudy,—he oppoſed its progreſs,—and cried loudly, that it was a ſpecies of mental luxury, which would ruin the republic. He went into Africa, and lived at Carthage, between the ſecond and third punic wars. He ſaw that this old rival of Rome was full of flouriſhing youth; that the country was populous, rich and commercial:—finally, that if Carthage was left too long in repoſe, it might again make Rome tremble, as it had done in the time of Hannibal. From that moment, he gave it in the ſenate as his opinion, that Carthage ſhould be deſtroyed; and he was the cauſe of the third punic war, which was terminated by the entire deſtruction of that city. Cato died at the age of ninety, without having ever been ill, or had recourſe to medicine.

Many things may be ſaid againſt this auſtere Cenſor of the vices and manners of his country: he took up for his model, *Curius Dentatus*, a Roman in the beginning of the republic; who was three times Conſul, received twice triumphal honours, but returned always after his victories to the plough, and lived humbly in his farms. It

was this Curius, who receiving from certain ambaſſadors conſiderable offers of gold and ſilver, ſhewed them his kettle full of radiſhes and greens, ſaying, "judge if a man "who is contented with ſuch a repaſt, has "need of your riches."

Cato affected to lead as frugal a life; but Curius, by living in this manner, only imitated his countrymen and cotemporaries, Cincinnatus, Fabricius, Camillus, &c. inſtead of which, Cato made himſelf ſingular, and wiſhed to be remarkable. We have ſome fragments of his writings; vanity, affectation of ſingularity, exceſſive œconomy and even avarice, are manifeſted in them. He wrote upon a country life, and ſaid, that nothing was ſo agreeable as augmenting our patrimony, and becoming rich; that ſlaves were the inſtruments of labour, of culture, of œconomy and commerce; that they ought to be made uſe of to improve our fortune, and not to be conſidered but with this view. Plutarch, however indulgent he might be to thoſe whoſe life he wrote, could not refrain from blaming this

manner of thinking, which he looked upon to be inhuman and unjuſt.

It is remarked that Cato, who condemned ſo many vices during the courſe of his ſevere Cenſorſhip, was favourable to thoſe with which he was himſelf infected; ſuch as uſury, which it is aſſerted, he practiſed in the moſt oppreſſive manner. When he was reproached with it, he anſwered, that there was no law which forbade it expreſsly: it might be ſo at that time, but did it become Cato to attach himſelf ſtrictly to the letter of the law, and not to diſtinguiſh that which was juſt and fitting, from what was not ſo?—Cato the Cenſor, was, therefore, ſelf-intereſted, avaricious, full of vanity, and perhaps, jealous of the great and powerful perſonages whom he perſecuted openly. He was ſevere to his equals, and inhuman to his inferiors: finally, his virtue was auſtere and cruel; which, as Montagne ſays, with reaſon, *is a trite and fooliſh ornament for philoſophy.* What are called his *Diſtichs*, are full of good ſenſe and reaſon; but they are certainly not by Cato the Cenſor: let us ſee if they do not better become his grandſon.

Cato of Utica, lived in times leſs happy than thoſe of his grandfather; and although the age in which he lived had no particular defect, he criticiſed it, much more by being virtuous, than by declaiming furiouſly againſt vices. His wiſdom was neither cynical, jealous nor haughty. He ſought not riches, but made uſe of thoſe he had, in being generous and liberal on proper occaſions; equally incapable of a blind friendſhip, and an inveterate hatred: he loved above all things, juſtice and the Republic. He was, when very young, under the tyranny of Sylla; and it is ſaid of him, that he aſked of every body he met, a ſword to plunge into the boſom of that oppreſſor of his country. Forty years afterwards he killed himſelf, rather than be obedient to Ceſar. He ſaw, eſpecially in a Republic, that dignities were not vain honours, but real charges; for the exerciſe of which, men were anſwerable to their country. He was at firſt Queſtor, as his grandfather had been, and he conducted himſelf in that office like an honeſt man, without being more difficult than was neceſſary, preferring the good application of public money to rigid

rigid œconomy. A virtue which never ceaſes for an inſtant, cannot fail of being known; for which reaſon, he enjoyed the reputation he merited; but the Republic was not very anxious to employ him a ſecond time; his way of thinking, far from being agreeable to his fellow citizens, inſpired them with fear. He was himſelf little deſirous of making a figure; but ſeeing the people ready to elect for tribune an unworthy citizen, and fearing the evils which might be the conſequence, he preſented himſelf with confidence, and was created. In fact, he found himſelf in a ſituation to prevent, under the pretence of the conſpiracy of Catiline, the recall of Pompey and his army to Rome, who was at war with Mithridates, and who had not yet conquered that fierce enemy of the Romans. If this propoſition had ſucceeded, on one hand, the great object of the Aſiatic war would have been loſt, for want of giving it the laſt ſuccours; and on the other, Rome would have been overcome by Pompey, inſtead of being diſturbed by Catiline.—Cato deferred at leaſt the ruin of his country, in preventing, for the moment, the re-

turn of Pompey with all his troops to Rome. he was near being aſſaſſinated on this occaſion by thoſe of the oppoſite party, which included almoſt all the Roman citizens, few of them foreſeeing the conſequences. The coolneſs and ſteady reſolution of Cato, at length opened their eyes, and they ſaved him from the hands of the other party. Pompey, informed of what had paſſed, returned to Rome, and found that Cato was a man whom it was abſolutely neceſſary to manage: he ſought his alliance, and aſked his niece in marriage for his ſon; Cato refuſed him. I will not give, ſaid he, an hoſtage to Pompey, againſt his country: when his party ſhall be the moſt juſt, it ſhall be mine. He kept his word, as long as Pompey, Cæſar and Craſſus, were united, for the Purpoſe of tyranniſing over Rome; he was the enemy of them all. Pompey frequently got him reproached for it; he always replied, that in his actions he never conſulted either friendſhip or perſonal enmity, and that he had not, nor ever ſhould have, any thing in view but the welfare of the Republic. All parties perceiving, equally, that it was impoſſible to gain him over to them,

them, they agreed to exclude him from the Conſulſhip; and this man, fitter than any other, to govern Rome, was never at the head of affairs. I do not know if this was a great evil to Rome; he would probably have retarded the ruin of the republic but for a very little time.—However this may be, the name of the ſecond Cato, to the ſhame of the Conſular Calendars, is not inſcribed therein.

At length, the time which Cato the wiſe had foreſeen, came to paſs. The tyrants of Rome were reduced to two, Cæſar and Pompey; the latter was conquered, and from that moment Cato took his part, or rather, as he ſays himſelf, he followed not Pompey, but attached himſelf to the remains of the Republic. It was contrary to his advice that Pompey gave battle at Pharſalia. Cato could not wiſh for a combat which was at all events to give a maſter to Rome. However, the armies met, much againſt his will; Cæſar conquered, and was from that moment the enemy of Cato. We know, the latter retired to Utica, and ſeeing this laſt place of Africa obliged to ſubmit, he

put himſelf to death, with a coolneſs and heroiſm which have made his act of ſuicide the model of all thoſe paſt, preſent, and to come.

What is principally to be conſidered in the death of Cato, is to know if he did well in quitting life. A Chriſtian cannot debate upon ſuch a point; but Pagan authors have thought that Cato ought to have preſerved himſelf for the Republic. For my part, putting myſelf in their place, I think naturally, that Cato of Utica took a good reſolution. The liberty of his country was the object of all his deſires and affections; which may, by ſome, be deemed a foible, for every perſon has one. He ſaw the liberty of Rome deſtroyed; in living a longer time he would have ſeen that, which he looked upon as a public misfortune, aggravated. Cæſar would have pardoned him, but he would have been under an obligation to Cæſar; and it is leſs painful to a man of ſpirit to finiſh his exiſtence, than to kiſs the hand of the tyrant who permits him to live.

It

It appears that Cato was a philoſopher of the ſect of the Stoics, whoſe principles have ſometimes been carried to a ridiculous degree, but well underſtood, they are ſublime and excellent. Thoſe of the Epicureans, well conceived, tend likewiſe to make men wiſe and happy. Cato the Stoic, feared neither death nor pain,—ſuch were the dogmas of the ſect; but he ſtill leſs ſought for, than feared them: therefore, he did nothing in his life which tended to give him uſeleſs pain, chagrin, or contradiction. When they happened to him, he ſupported them courageouſly. He never meddled with ſtate affairs, but when he thought himſelf called upon to do ſo: and as ſoon as he ſaw that he could no longer be of uſe to his country, and that he ſhould be deprived of the enjoyments of a private life, becauſe he had taken too great a part in public affairs, he put an end to his exiſtence. If he was in ſome degree blameable in the effect, he was not ſo in the principle. The contrary happens in the greater number of ſuicides: men kill themſelves for bad reaſons, in general, or they take a wrong time to do it. This is a leſſon for the Engliſh, and of which they

they ſtand in great need: they ought to be put in mind, that there was formerly a law in the republic of Marſeilles, which permitted the citizens to drink the *juice of hemlock*; but not till after they had given ſufficient reaſons to the magiſtrates, and received their approbation of them: by means of theſe precautions it may be eaſily imagined, that nothing was ſo rare in Marſeilles as a ſuicide.

One laſt reflection, which the lives of the two Catos offer to me is, that their philoſophical manner of thinking, had given them both an unpardonable indifference for their families. Odd circumſtances of this kind, which I will not repeat, are related of them: I will only obſerve, that theſe proceeded from different motives. Cato the Cenſor, given up entirely to avarice, vanity, and a ridiculous attachment to the laws, conſidered every thing in a civil order, and nothing in a natural or domeſtic one. His grandſon was very differently affected; the welfare of the Republic abſorbed all his ideas:—however it may be, theſe two great men were inexcuſeable, in depriving themſelves of the

two

two greateſt enjoyments of life, conjugal and paternal love.

The miſtaken deſire of imitating the virtues of Curius Dentatus, authoriſed the conduct of Cato the Cenſor. The example of Cato of Utica, appeared, to his nephew Brutus, a ſufficient authority to aſſaſſinate Cæſar in full ſenate: he committed this crime, or rather this cruel and uſeleſs vengeance, with as pure intentions as thoſe of his uncle. He was, like him, the enemy of tyranny, without being that of the tyrant: the baſis of his action was juſtice, and a zeal to maintain the eſtabliſhed laws of his country: but this principle was badly regulated and applied. Tyrants ſhould be oppoſed in the beginning, and even puniſhed, if it be poſſible; but there is but one method of treating confirmed and inevitable tyranny, which is that of ſoothing it ſkilfully.

ESSAY

ESSAY XV.

CHARACTER OF LUCULLUS.

THOSE who know Roman hiſtory but imperfectly, do not render ſufficient juſtice to *Lucullus*. We have heard ſpeak of his magnificence and love of voluptuouſneſs; but we forget the ſervices he did to his country, before he gave himſelf up to the amuſements which ſweetened and embelliſhed his retreat. He ſtudied to advantage the Belles Lettres during his youth, became afterwards a ſtateſman, a great general, and, towards the decline of his life, a philoſopher. Being a friend to Sylla, he paſſed over too lightly the cruelties of this dictator, but he was not his accomplice in them. He was executor to his will, and tutor to his ſon, in preference to Pompey. After having held all the public employments, capable of forming great men, as well at home as abroad, he became at laſt conſul. After his conſulſhip, the government of Cilicia becoming vacant, he had every right to demand

mand it; it was a delicate buſineſs, and he would have had much difficulty in ſucceeding, had he not made *Cethegus*, tribune of the people, his friend. To obtain which, he found it neceſſary to apply to *Precia* the courteſan; he feigned himſelf in love with her, knowing that this means, employed with addreſs, was the moſt ſure one of ſucceeding with women. He obtained what he wanted from the lover of his miſtreſs, and little ſcrupulous about the means he made uſe of to arrive at his propoſed end, he turned all to advantage.

He went into Aſia, and by his wiſe conduct pacified the troops which had rebelled and mutinied, led them on to battle againſt Mithridates, and greatly embarraſſed this formidable enemy of the Romans. At the ſame time he acquired the friendſhip of the inhabitants of the conquered provinces; ſtopped the depredations committed by the farmers of the revenue, who were for the moſt part Roman knights, and forced them to eaſe the people, or at leaſt to regulate with equity the receipt of taxes. This act of juſtice and moderation did him much

honour. Having gloriouſly executed his firſt commiſſion, he was ſome time after ſent again towards Aſia, and conducted himſelf with the ſame prudence and diſintereſtedneſs. He found that the true means of conquering Mithridates, was to cut of the proviſions from his army, which was immenſe; this ſucceeded—he beſieged Amiſus, which contained the chief riches of the king. He conquered this capital, and the Roman troops found in it a conſiderable booty. It did not depend upon the general that the army was not as orderly in taking poſſeſſion of theſe treaſures, as the profit ariſing from them was great, but he never could obtain this from his ſoldiers: they were already greatly relaxed in their ancient diſcipline: nevertheleſs he thought of puſhing ſtill farther his conqueſts. Mithridates had retired to the dominions of Tigranes, king of Armenia, his ſon in law; it was there that *Lucullus* ought to have followed him.

Lucullus found means to diſperſe the immenſe armies of Tigranes and his father in-law, although his own was infinitely inferior.

By

By theſe means he gave the greateſt proof of his knowledge in the art of war. He was enterpriſing enough to form the ſiege of Tigranocerta, capital of the kingdom of Armenia: its approaches were defended by an army of near three hundred thouſand men: the Roman general diſperſed them and looked upon victory as certain the moment he had given a glance at their poſition. *We have them*, ſaid he: it was on one of thoſe days which the Romans had marked in their calendar as unfortunate, becauſe it had formerly been memorable by defeats: *I will put it among the fortunate days*, added he; and he did ſo accordingly. An hundred thouſand barbarians fell in the battle which followed, wherein it is ſaid, no more than five Romans were killed, and an hundred wounded.

The conſequence of this victory was the taking of the capital. The conqueror marched towards Artaxata, the ancient capital of Armenia: he would have taken it, for Mithridates and Tigranes flew before him, making but vain efforts to ſave it; but the cold being ſevere, the Roman ſoldiers loaded

loaded with riches, declared openly they would not expoſe themſelves to the rigours of a winter campaign, to gain a triumph leſs flattering to them than to their general. It was in vain that *Lucullus* ſet them the example of braving fatigue as well as danger; his ſoldiers did not follow him, and he was forced to leave his army inactive, and to renounce the honour of terminating a war ſo happily begun. During this time, intrigues were carried on at Rome againſt him, and his ſucceſſor was named. When the ſeaſon became favourable, Pompey took the command of the Roman army, eaſily conquered Tigranes, and forced Mithridates to ſuicide.

It was then that *Lucullus* ſtrove to conſole himſelf, by leading the moſt eaſy and voluptuous life, for the mortifications he had met with in his political and military career. He felt that he had a right to repoſe, and that he could do nothing better than to make his retreat agreeable; he had moreover, experienced ſome domeſtic vexations. He had ſucceſſively married two wives, whoſe conduct had given him much pain, and from whom he had been obliged to

to live ſeparate, although the ſecond was the ſiſter of the auſtere Cato. He ſaw that in Rome both ſexes had violated the laws of virtue, honour and decency: it ſeems as if he had ſaid to himſelf, "I will think of "my perſonal pleaſures only, ſince I can no "longer hope to acquire glory: I will re- "nounce the ambition of gaining the eſteem "of a people, who does not merit mine."

If *Lucullus*, loaded with the ſpoils of Aſia, had ſtill been ambitious of acting a great part in Rome, he would have made himſelf a party there, and have greatly embarraſſed Cæſar and Pompey; he would at leaſt have entered the triumvirate like Craſſus, and have had more weight in it, becauſe he had more merit; but he preferred the enjoyment of his riches. He built himſelf magnificent and delightful habitations both in town and country; was profuſe in the entertainments he gave to his friends, and to thoſe whom he thought worthy of being admitted into his ſociety. He was noble and generous to others, but without ſuffering himſelf to be importuned: he aſſiſted them with his purſe and credit, but did not ſtrive

to make himſelf partiſans, and required no kind of acknowledgment. He ſaw with indifference Rome agitated by different factions, took no part therein, and was not perſecuted by any of them. He had formed, as a man of taſte, collections of books, ſtatues, and other curioſities,—cultivated letters and the ſciences: finally, he denied himſelf no kind of ſenſual pleaſure, but declared that he was not a ſlave to his paſſions. If *Lucullus* appeared to be an Egotiſt, and if he were actually ſo, it was becauſe he had been a zealous citizen, a good officer, ſufficiently ambitious, and even avaricious of glory. He had learnt, that, in certain countries, and in certain circumſtances, when a man has paid to his country his contingency of zeal and ſervices, it is fully permitted, and even wiſe, to think of nothing but himſelf.

ESSAY

ESSAY XVI.

CHARACTERS OF THE TWO GRACCHI.

THE life of the two *Gracchi*, cannot be read without concern, either in Plutarch, or in the hiſtory of the conſpiracy of the *Gracchi*, by the Abbé de Saint Real. Young men are naturally pleaſed with the merit of theſe two young republicans; they admire their audacity, and applaud their zeal for eſtabliſhing in their country good order and equality. They ſoon think that if they were in their ſituations, they would act as they did, and that if the execution were dangerous, at leaſt the enterpriſe would be glorious.

In maturer age, men judge of the *Gracchi* with more coolneſs and juſtice, and do not over-rate their good qualities: for my part, I confeſs that I think I ſee in their conduct more ambition, impetuoſity and raſhneſs, than true patriotic zeal. Grand children, by their mother, of the great Scipio, they

ſignaliſed themſelves at firſt in war. Tiberius, the elder of the two, gained obſidional crowns, and did wonders in a battle which the conſul, under whom he ſerved in quality of queſtor, loſt by his imprudence. The young queſtor was charged to make peace with the conquering enemy: he ſucceeded in this with much addreſs, conſidering the diſagreeable circumſtances in which the Roman army was; and if he did not ſave it, he ſecured his own reputation.

This beginning warmed the ambition of Tiberius; he wiſhed to fly to glory and riches, but found that the pretorial functions would not afford him opportunities favourable enough; he thought that he ſhould wait too long before he arrived at the conſulſhip and the command of armies; the office of tribune of the people, preſented to him new and eaſy means of ſignaliſing himſelf, by ſupporting the loweſt claſs of citizens, againſt the rich and powerful: he therefore ſolicited and obtained the tribuneſhip without difficulty, perceiving the great advantages which were attached to it. The tribunes had equally the power, for the pub-

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lic intereſt, of oppoſing new laws, and ſoliciting the execution of old ones. He attempted to renew the Agrarian law. This law commanded that no citizen ſhould poſſeſs more lands than he could cultivate himſelf, and that he ſhould be obliged to give the ſurplus to thoſe of his fellow citizens, whoſe patrimony was leſs conſiderable than his own. It was excellent in its principles for a riſing Republic; but it became no longer of uſe when Rome had conquered ſo many kingdoms, and had carried her victorious arms into the middle of Aſia, and eſpecially to the coaſts of Africa.

Yet the people, who conſider leſs the difficulty of deſtroying certain abuſes, than the advantages which would ariſe from a reform of them, approved of the propoſition of *Gracchus*, who became immediately their idol. The rich and great repreſented to him in vain the embarraſſments he was going to throw them into; he rejected their repreſentations and followed his purpoſe; and upon being aſked if he meant to take from thoſe who appeared to be too rich, the lands they poſſeſſed without making

them an equivalent, he declared that they were to be paid for them out of the public treaſure, and this treaſure was founded upon their own wealth. Another tribune oppoſed the paſſing of this law; but *Gracchus* carried things with ſo high a hand, that he had much difficulty in ſaving his colleague from the hands of the multitude who would have torn him to pieces. *Gracchus* was named Triumvir with his father in-law and brother, in order to oblige all the rich citizens to give their lands to the poor ones. It may eaſily be conceived what diſorder the execution of this plan would have occaſioned, when, by good fortune, Attalus king of Pergamus died, and made the Roman people heirs to his kingdom and immenſe treaſures.

Gracchus claimed immediately, in the name of the Roman people, this ſucceſſion; he pretended that the money ought to be diſtributed among the new poſſeſſors of lands, to enable them to cultivate them; and that the kingdom of Pergamus ought to be governed in the name and for the advantage of the Romans, without the Senate's taking

the leaſt part therein. This laſt propoſition, put the Senators out of all patience: they ſaw it was abſolutely neceſſary to get rid of *Gracchus*, without which, he would deſtroy the ariſtocracy, and by the aid of the people and the democracy, ſoon become maſter of Rome. The deſtruction of *Tiberius Gracchus*, was therefore determined, and he was put to death in a very ſingular manner; the Senate in a body was his executioner. The Senators ſet out from the capitol, and croſſed the city, went to the aſſembly of the people, followed by their clients armed, having themſelves cuiraſſes, and ſwords under their robes. The people were at that time giving their ſuffrages for the continuation of *Gracchus* in the office of tribune, or rather they were to give them; and although almoſt all the plebeians wiſhed it, the noiſe was ſo great, it was impoſſible to hear or take the voices regularly. The Senators appeared; the people much aſtoniſhed, opened a paſſage and let them approach the tribunal where *Gracchus* was; he would fain have made his eſcape; but a man of the name of Satureius gave the ſignal by ſtriking the firſt blow, and the tribune was ſoon

overwhelmed by numbers. As ſoon as this was over, the Senate arreſted an hundred of the principal friends of Tiberius, and declared a greater number, who had retired and hid themſelves, baniſhed from Rome. The people overcome by fear, dared not to gather up the remains of their broken idol. The brother and family of *Gracchus* could not obtain permiſſion to render him ſepulchral honours, and his body was thrown into the Tiber.

Caius Gracchus, the younger brother of Tiberius, was at this time, engaged in the war againſt the Numidians, in the ſuite of his uncle Scipio. Who would not have thought that the example of his elder brother would have ſerved him as a leſſon, and have prevented him from acting the odious and frequently uſeleſs part of reformer of the State: it happened the contrary. After the misfortune of his brother, he remained ſome time in ſecret, employed himſelf in adorning his mind, and learning eloquence, in which he ſucceeded ſo well, that on his return to Rome, and Tiberius being almoſt forgotten, he made a great figure

figure at the bar; maintained with great ability ſome very intereſting cauſes, which he gained with general applauſe. He was ſent queſtor into Africa, where he rendered important ſervices to his General; for he not only managed the military cheſt with judgment and œconomy, but the Roman troops in that country, being in want of many conveniencies of life, which they could not procure of themſelves, he prevailed upon Micipſa, king of Numidia, whom he had made his friend, to procure them every thing they could deſire. He returned to Rome after three years queſtorſhip; and it was in vain that his enemies ſtrove to cavil with him about his adminiſtration; the general wiſh of the troops ſupported him. He then conceived the dangerous ambition of becoming tribune, as his brother had been. At the name of *Gracchus* the people called to mind Tiberius, and in ſpite of all the oppoſition and intrigues of the Senate, *Caius Gracchus* was elected.

He contented himſelf for ſometime with haranguing gracefully and with elegance; he delighted the Romans, and alarmed the great

great, who were not deceived in thinking that he would ſoon make a ſtorm break over their heads. The Senate having decided two important cauſes contrary to his advice, he complained of it loudly, and formed a company of three hundred Roman knights, which company was called the Counter Senate; becauſe it took upon itſelf to criticiſe and reform, under the authority of the people, the judgments given by the three hundred Senators; and to protect thoſe people, who appeared to be unjuſtly oppreſſed. This eſtabliſhment made the Senate tremble, and not without reaſon, as it gained Caius the greateſt popularity, which urged him to form ſeveral other excellent eſtabliſhments, ſuch as public granaries, bridges and ſtreets, till he became the idol of the people: the Senate conſidered the beſt way to check his deſigns, was to oppoſe to him another tribune, who appeared to be ſtill more zealous than himſelf; his name was Druſus: but *Gracchus* unmaſked him, and in order to ſurpaſs him entirely, brought forward the project of the Agrarian law, which had been ſo fatal to his brother. Scipio, the ſecond Africanus, although couſin to *Gracchus*,

chus, was at that time his moſt cruel adverſary: he enjoyed all the conſideration and eſteem which the honour of putting a final period to the Punic war, and to the exiſtence of Carthage, could give to a Roman citizen. *Gracchus* without being alarmed at this great renown, made head againſt him, with as much ability as audacity, aided by Fulvius Flaccus, whom the protection of *Gracchus* had raiſed to the conſulſhip.

Whilſt theſe things were paſſing, Scipio was found dead in his bed; this ſudden death cauſed ſuſpicions to fall upon *Gracchus* and his friends, and perhaps the tribune did not take pains enough to deſtroy them; thinking that he had no more rivals ſo formidable as Scipio had been, his audacity encreaſed; and the ſenate found that this ſecond tyrant was not leſs dangerous than his brother, and that it was full as neceſſary to cut off the head of the ſecond hydra, as it had been that of the firſt. In a great aſſembly of the Roman people, *Caius Gracchus* made a propoſition to deſtroy the elevated benches for the conſular perſonages and principal ſenators; the Senate ſet immediately

mediately a price upon his head, and the people defended him no more than they had done Tiberius. *Gracchus* made propoſitions of peace; he was attended to for the ſole purpoſe of gaining time enough to judge how far he would be ſupported. As ſoon as it was known that he would be entirely forſaken by his friends, he was purſued; and the laſt of the *Gracchi*, being without reſource, reſolved upon putting himſelf to death. The Roman people mourned the loſs of their hero, without ſtriving to avenge his fate. Two ſtatues were erected to the memory of the brothers;—even temples were conſecrated to them, and the ſenate ſuffered, with a malicious ſmile, theſe vain honours to be paid to their memories. The people are freqently ungrateful to thoſe who endeavour to liberate them from ſlavery, as they generally ſuſpect that their pretended deliverers act as much from motives of private intereſt, as for that of the public;—they are often right: even the *Gracchi* were not free from this ſuſpicion; however, another of leſs conſequence, may be formed againſt them, which is that of raſhneſs, imprudence and inconſiderateneſs.

It

It ſeems to me, that they abuſed their good ſenſe, zeal and abilities: ſuppoſing even that they were ſincere, they were ſeverely puniſhed for it.—Yet theſe examples have not prevented them from having about ſeventeen hundred years after their deaths, ſome imitators: ſuch were in the ſixteenth century, the *Count Jean-Louis de Fieſque*, a Genoeſe, and in the ſeventeenth, *Cardinal de Retz.*

ESSAY

ESSAY XVII.

CHARACTER OF COUNT DE' FIESQUE, AND CARDINAL DE RETZ.

JEAN LOUIS DE FIESQUE, Count de Lavagne, of one of the moſt illuſtrious houſes of Genoa, was reſpected on account of his birth, riches, the graces of his perſon, and the agreeableneſs of his wit; and being no more than twenty-two years of age, was imprudent enough to ſtrive to imitate the Gracchi, and finiſhed his career as unhappily as they had done. The hiſtory of the revolution which he attempted to bring on at Genoa, and to which he fell a victim, was written in Italian, in 1629, by Auguſtin Maſcardi, in the manner of that of Catiline, by Salluſt. Maſcardi introduced into his hiſtory, in imitation of Salluſt, harangues or diſcourſes, which were ſuppoſed to be delivered by the conſpirators, deliberating with their chief, upon the ſucceſs of the conſpiracy they had formed. The *Cardinal de Retz*, whilſt he was yet very young, found this hiſtory in Italian ſo intereſting, that

that he tranſlated and embelliſhed it; and applied himſelf with an aſſiduity, which proves he was highly pleaſed with the character of the hero, and that he would gladly have taken him for a model: the Cardinal ſeems to acknowledge this, by ſome paſſages in his Memoirs. Yet what could he find to flatter himſelf with in this reſemblance? and to what end did he think to arrive, by pretending to imitate the *Count de Fieſque?* This would be difficult to diſcover, if it were not known that there is no reaſoning with the paſſions, and that brilliant actions are, for the moſt part, rather the effect of a violence of character, than the conſequence of any project formed with reflection.

The conſpiracy of *Fieſque* was briefly as follows: *André Doria* after having been a long time attached to the ſervice of Francis the firſt, became diſſatisfied with this monarch, his miniſters and favourites; and abandoned the French party, as much perhaps to vex the Court which he had betrayed, as from a true patriotic zeal. He had reſtored to the City of Genoa its ancient liberty; and eſtabliſhed there an ariſtocratical government, of which he was the real chief.

André

André Doria, old and reſpectable by his victories, was not perſonally expoſed to the jealouſy of his fellow citizens; but he had a nephew whom he looked upon as his adopted ſon, called *Jannetin Doria*, who was young, lively and haughty: it was on him fell the hatred of thoſe who thought that in a Republic there ought to be a kind of equality among all the Members of the ariſtocratic party. The *Count de Fieſque* held out this principle when talking to his friends; he excited them to revolt; though in public he ſhewed the higheſt eſteem for *Jannetin Doria*, whoſe ſiſter had lately been married to the brother-in-law of the *Count de Fieſque*.

At a moment when it was leaſt expected, *Fieſque* convoked an aſſembly of friends at his own houſe, and diſcovered to them a plan of revolt, in which there was more audacity than wiſdom. He had found means to purchaſe four row-boats, which were in the port of Genoa, and which he had armed, as he pretended, for a cruiſe againſt the Mahometan pirates. He had gained over ſome ſoldiers of the garriſon, and going out at midnight with the conſpirators, he attempted to ſurprize the palace of the Republic; but

but he did not ſucceed: from thence wiſhing to gain the port, and to go on board one of his row boats; he had no ſooner ſet his foot upon a plank than it turned under him: he fell into the mud, and the weight of his arms bearing him down he was ſuffocated. His partiſans knew nothing of his death for ſome hours afterwards, and the revolt continued the remainder of the night: the gates of the city were ſhut, and Jannetin Doria was maſſacred in attempting to defend them.

Old Doria was gone from Genoa, and the Senate was ready to capitulate with *Fieſque*, when it was perceived that this chief of the revolt did not exiſt. His name, which during a whole night, and part of the following day, had ſerved as a word of rallying to the partiſans of liberty or of a new ſlavery, was proſcribed the day following. Old André Doria returned to put the laſt ſeal to the condemnation of his enemy. He made one of his relations, Jerome de Fieſque, ſuffer the greateſt torments, and baniſhed the others, to the fifth generation, from the States of the Republic. The chief branch came to eſtabliſh itſelf in France, and to form

there a conſiderable houſe: the laſt of the *Fieſques* died unmarried in 1708. There were in the thirteenth century two Popes of that family, and afterwards a great number of Cardinals. The younger branches returned to Genoa, where they exiſted not long ago.

Jean Francois Paul de Goudi, wrote at ſeventeen years of age, the hiſtory of the *Count de Fieſque*; but he did not ſo ſoon find means to ſhew his talent, or rather his turn for intrigue; for it was not before he was twenty-eight years of age, that he was named coadjutor of the Archbiſhopric of Paris, poſſeſſed by Jean Francois de Goudi, his uncle. Lewis XIV. aſcended the throne the ſame year, and the troubles of the Fronde did not begin till five years afterwards, in 1648. The Coadjutor ſignalized himſelf till the year 1652, when he was arreſted, and put into priſon; firſt at Vincennes, afterwards in the Citadel of Nantes, whence he made his eſcape in 1655. He wandered for ſometime in different parts of Europe, and having made his peace with the Court, in 1661, he reſigned the Archbiſhopric

of Paris, and kept nothing but the Abbey of Saint Denis; he lived afterwards in a very becoming manner, having recovered from thoſe errors into which the examples of the Gracchi, of Catiline and the *Count de Fieſque* had thrown him. Yet he was pleaſed in his old age, with the remebrance of the ſtir he had made in his youth. Having a good memory, he related with ſatisfaction the particulars of his turbulent and agitated life; he has even written them, and his work is well known under the name of Memoirs of the *Cardinal de Retz*. I may ſay it is a family work, becauſe my near relations have preſerved the manuſcript, from which it was printed in the year 1717. I dare moreover aſſure the reader, that if this manuſcript had been loſt, I ſhould have found it in good preſervation in the converſation of my uncle, M. de Caumartin, biſhop of Blois: this prelate, from whoſe converſation I learned the ſtile of the wits in the time of Louis XIV. had been brought up, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, in the lap of the *Cardinal de Retz*, who had permiſſion given him, a ſhort time before his death, to reſign in his favour the Abbey

of Buzay, which the Cardinal himſelf had been inveſted with when he was very young. My uncle kept it 'till his death. My maternal grandfather, (father of the biſhop) was the intimate friend of the Cardinal; my grandmother, who lived to a great age, had known him particularly; therefore I have on all ſides excellent traditions about this famous perſonage, and I can take upon me to ſay, that he was really a turbulent man; a man of intrigue, without motive or object, making a noiſe for the ſake of doing ſo; and that he was very awkward in the choice of his means, although he had in other reſpects ſome excellent qualities. Such men are diſagreeable to meet with, and dangerous to follow, when they meddle with public affairs; but when they are quite retired from them, they are ſometimes delightful in converſation.

I mean to give ſome touches of the character of the *Cardinal de Retz*, and of his adventures, more from my own private knowledge and reflections, than from what is already publiſhed.

The

The *Cardinal de Retz* had for his preceptor *M. Vincent*, who has ſince been beatified, and will, without doubt, ſoon be canoniſed, under the name of *Saint Vincent of Paule*.—If it were true, that thoſe who are charged with the education of young people, have an influence upon their character and conduct in the world, the *Cardinal de Retz* ought to have been the moſt mild, charitable and pious of all prelates; but, either he did not profit by the leſſons of his bleſſed preceptor, or did not hearken to him. His father and mother on the contrary, loved M. Vincent to adoration; and it is perhaps for this reaſon that their ſon thought little about him. It happens but too frequently, that children take a pride in acting contrary to what they have ſeen practiſed by their fathers and mothers.

Madam de Goudi had a part in all the charitable eſtabliſhments which muſt immortalize M. Vincent: the Foundling Hoſpital, the Grey Siſters, and the Miſſionaries of Saint Lazarus. How happy would ſhe have been to have become the mother of a reſpectable and an edifying prelate; but her

ſon did not afford her this ſatisfaction, although he was promoted to the firſt dignities of the church.

Her huſband, father of the *Cardinal de Retz*, after having been General of the Gallies, became a widower, entered the congregation of Oratorians, and was admitted a father of that order. He was buried in the church of the ſeminary Saint Magloire, in 1662.

The ſon ought to have begun where the father ended; but he took quite another route:—although he was at thirteen years of age, a Canon of Nôtre-Dame, and incumbent of two abbeys, he ſhewed, on leaving college, inclinations quite oppoſite to thoſe which the profeſſion he was deſtined to required; and it may be ſaid, that he did every thing in his power to loſe the Archbiſhopric of Paris, which was to him almoſt a ſure heritage, having been held by his grand and two proximate uncles. Before he arrived at the age of ſeventeen years he had fought three duels, and been concerned in two affairs of gallantry which had made

ſome

ſome noiſe.—Nevertheleſs his family was determined to make him the coadjutor of his uncle, and he was obliged, notwithſtanding his conduct and inclinations, to remain in the church, and make, whether he would or not, a great fortune therein.

The young *Abbé de Retz* intrigued at Court,—and againſt whom? Againſt the Cardinal de Richelieu:—and for why? This is what he would have had much difficulty in explaining, for it could be of no ſort of uſe to him. It was at this time that he tranſlated the hiſtory of the conſpiracy of *Fieſque*; he ſhewed his work to the Abbé de Boiſrobert, and accompanied it undoubtedly with ſome reflections, which gave this great wit, devoted to the Cardinal de Richelieu, to underſtand, that the *Abbé de Retz* was well enough diſpoſed to become factious and a conſpirator. Boiſrobert told this to the firſt Miniſter, who ſaid publicly, that he ſaw plain enough the little Abbé would ſome day become a dangerous being. This alarmed M. de Goudi, his father; but the ſon was on the contrary delighted with it: he found himſelf highly flattered, by being

treated at his age, as a man dangerous to the firſt Miniſter, who made France and all Europe tremble. To ſupport this fine character, which he pretended already to act, he diſputed the firſt place of Licentiate in the Sorbonne, with the Abbé de la Mothe Houdancourt, (related to the Cardinal and protected by him,) and obtained it. Richelieu, Proviſeur and Reſtaurateur of the Sorbonne, was equally aſtoniſhed and amazed; he threatened the doctors who had voted againſt his relation; they all went trembling to the *Abbé de Retz* to inform him of it, who anſwered them generouſly, though haughtily, that rather than be the cauſe of diſputes between the gentlemen of the Sorbonne and their protector, he would reſign the place, and be contented with having merited it.

So haughty a conduct alarmed the family of Goudi. The Abbé was ſent into Italy: he diſtinguiſhed himſelf at Venice by his gallantries, at Rome by his uncouth behaviour, and ſoon returned to Paris, to ſupport again the dangerous and uſeleſs part of enemy and rival of the Cardinal de Richelieu.

lieu. Sometimes he attached himſelf to women who were diſpleaſing to the Cardinal, at other times, he paid his addreſſes to his miſtreſſes, and even took them from him : at length he entered into a conſpiracy, which had nothing leſs in view than the aſſaſſination of Richelieu. It appears that this project did not at all frighten the young Abbé, he thought himſelf a little *Fieſque* : he was about the ſame age, twenty-two years old, which was the age of his model when he was killed ; but fortunately the conſpiracies of the French Abbé did not break out ſo ſuddenly as thoſe of the Genoeſe Count ; he had the happineſs of ſeeing all his projects miſcarry one after the other, without any accident or danger to his perſon. After this, he was given to underſtand, that he could do nothing more unprofitable than to unite himſelf to turbulent men, with whom he could gain nothing, but might, on the contrary ruin his fortune. He found that it was neceſſary to change his manner of proceeding ; he aſſociated with devotees, without becoming one himſelf; and with eccleſiaſtics who were reputed holy, before he led an exemplary life : he undertook to

bring about extraordinary converſions, before he was himſelf converted; and he found the moſt eſteemed clergy, and thoſe who held the firſt rank in the church, very favourably diſpoſed to receive him as a prodigal ſon, without waiting till he returned from his errors.

The good M. Vincent himſelf took pleaſure in believing, that the inſtructions which he had formerly given him, were not ſeeds ſown on bad ground; the devotees thought it an honour to reckon him of their number, and without putting him to ſevere proofs, they took him to the coadjutory of the Archbiſhopric of Paris. It was neceſſary to begin by reconciling him to the Cardinal; this was brought about: it was mentioned in his favour, and as an act of converſion on his part, that he did not enter into the conſpiracy of Cinq-Mars. Nothing more was neceſſary to prove that he had renounced all intrigue; but it appeared by what followed that he was not yet cured of it.

Every diſpoſition was made to procure him the Coadjutorſhip of Paris, when the Cardinal

Cardinal de Richelieu died. Lewis XIII. died ſoon after: had he lived, he would probably have finiſhed the affair. This honour was reſerved for the Queen, Anne of Auſtria, who began her regency by giving her confidence to people of the greateſt incapacity: they made her commit another fault, by prevailing upon her to inſure the Archbiſhopric of Paris to a perſon as turbulent and dangerous as the future *Cardinal de Retz*.

Mazarine, who ſoon found means to diſplace theſe firſt favourites of the Regent, would not perhaps have been guilty of this fault; but after all, the *Cardinal de Retz* made him more afraid than he did him harm: the policy of theſe two perſonages was of a very different nature; they had, perhaps, both of them bad hearts: they were neither of them reſpectable on account of their virtue and honour; but Mazarine had his views and purſued them, his head never failed him; if he was not very brave, he was neither raſh nor inconſiderate: if he was not a great man, he was an able and dexterous one. The *Cardinal de Retz*, was neither;

neither; for a man is not great, when he has not great views; and of what uſe are talents and addreſs, when a man has no determined object to purſue.

The *Abbé de Retz*, being Coadjutor of Paris, retired to Saint Lazarus, near his old maſter, M. Vincent. It may be conceived that the good old man gave him the beſt advice he was capable of: he feigned to profit by it, but this was on his part mere policy. He acknowledges in his Memoirs, that he employed the hours deſtined to meditation, in reflecting, not upon the manner of living like a good Biſhop, but upon that of taking advantage of his character and place, and of doing evil methodically. I have known many turbulent men like him, who, when they had time on their hands, formed plans of conduct deteſtable in their object, but excellently combined, and very likely to ſucceed, if they had been followed. The Coadjutor appeared for ſome time to act agreeable to his plan: he preached in Paris, and put into his ſermons, (as my uncle aſſures me,) both ſenſe and erudition, according to the taſte of the age, and even an appearance

appearance of piety, which he learned without doubt from the good M. Vincent. The people of Paris were delighted to ſee their Archbiſhop in the pulpit: he affected to perform other religious duties, in diſcharging the epiſcopal functions of his uncle in his abſence.

Having thus prepared the way, the Coadjutor waited only for an opportunity to break out, and to reap ſome advantage from the prudence he had obſerved in his conduct, and which he was incapable of continuing for a long time; but great opportunities did not offer for the ſpace of four or five years: And in the mean time he had ſome diſputes about his rank, in quality of Dioceſan of Paris: he maintained them with audacity, and proved to the Cardinal Mazarine that he was not a contemptible enemy. On the other hand, it would have coſt too much to have gained him over, for it appeared that his pretenſions were nothing leſs than to fill the place of the Cardinal.

In the mean time, the great indiſcretions committed by the Queen, enflamed the minds

minds of the Pariſians: it was then that the Coadjutor played his great game; he gained the people ſecretly, by charities to the poor, without explaining what he wanted with them. Sometimes, he went to the Queen, to inform her Majeſty of the bad diſpoſition of the people; at othertimes he told the Parliament of thoſe of the Queen and her Miniſter. The Coadjutor manœuvred in this manner till the famous day of the barricades, when he ſhook off all diſguiſe. There is nothing more curious than the details contained in his Memoirs, upon the commencement of the war of Paris, and its conſequences. The weakneſs of the Queen and of thoſe who were about her; the artful, but illiberal manner of treating the Cardinal; the ridicule and folly of ſeveral Members of Parliament, and the inconſiderate turbulence of the people of Paris, are therein deſcribed in the moſt lively and true colours.

The Coadjutor uſed but little diſſimulation, in the miſchievous and fooliſh part he acted in that affair, which continued during the years 1648 and 1649. After a trifling interruption, it began again in 1650, and laſted

laſted till the year 1651; and he there appeared in it more turbulent, raſh and inconſiderate than ever. The deſcription of the ſtrange ſcene which paſſed in the great hall of the palace, where he was to aſſaſſinate the prince, or be aſſaſſinated by him, would appear to us apocryphal, if it had not been public, and tranſmitted to poſterity by people of all ranks, who were witneſſes of what paſſed; but it will always appear inconceivable that the principal actor ſhould relate it with a frankneſs and *naiveté*, of which we have no example.

The Coadjutor obtained in 1652, the Hat, which conſtituted the whole glory of his life; but he would have obtained it much ſooner if his conduct had been different from what it was. He is not the only man in the world who has taken every imaginable pains to deſtroy a fortune which appeared certain, and to render problematical the beſt founded hopes. If he did not loſe the Hat, which could not well eſcape him, every ſtep he took from the moment he had it, tended to make him loſe the eſteem and conſideration of the public; and to deprive him of that

that repoſe which he did not enjoy again till ten years afterwards, in the moſt ſilent retreat, and profound inaction.

I obſerved at the beginning of this article, that Meſſieurs Caumartins, my relations, had had ſome part in the publication of the Memoirs of the *Cardinal de Retz*; it conſiſted in their entruſting to ſome indiſcreet perſons, a copy of theſe Memoirs, which had been found in the Convent of Commercy, in Lorraine, where the Cardinal had paſſed ſome years, and of which he was Seigneur; not that it depended upon any of his benefices, but becauſe it was a part of the inheritance of his mother, Marguerite de Silly de la Rochepot. The good women who were in poſſeſſion of theſe Memoirs, did not know either the merits or demerits of them; I believe they were even ignorant of the lady to whom they were addreſſed: I know no more of her than they did; but it is certain that it was in the beginning of the Regency of the Duke of Orleans, in 1717, that the firſt furtive edition of theſe Memoirs appeared. The Regent aſked my father, who was ſtill Lieutenant of the Police, what effect

effect he thought the book might produce: "None that ought to make your Grace "uneasy," answered M. d'Argenson; "the "manner in which the Cardinal de Retz "speaks of himself,—the frank discovery "of his character,—avowal of his faults, "and the information he gives of the ill "success of which his imprudence was the "cause, will encourage no one to imitate "him: on the contrary, his misfortunes "are a lesson to the rash and turbulent. It "cannot be conceived why this man has "left his confession in writing? if it has "been printed with the hope of procuring "him the absolution of the public, this "will certainly be refused him."—My father might be right in his judgment, of the effect which these Memoirs ought to have produced, yet they had quite a contrary one.

The appearance of sincerity which runs through this work, seduced and delighted mens minds. Although the style be neither pure nor brilliant, it was read with pleasure and avidity; and what is still more, there were people who were so enraptured

with the character of the Cardinal de Retz, that they thought ſeriouſly of imitating him; and as the Cardinal had not been diſguſted with the characters of the Gracchi, of Catiline, and the Count de Fieſque, nor with the unhappy fate which befel them; ſo his diſgraces did not diſcourage thoſe who were inclined to take him for a model, although they had not perhaps his ſpirit of intrigue. Government perceived this in the year 1718, and the Regent ſpoke of it again to my father, who was become Keeper of the Seals; a new remedy was ſought for the bad effects which the Memoirs had produced. It was propoſed to print the Memoirs of Joly, who had been his Secretary; they were alſo in the library of M. de Caumartin, who made ſome difficulty in giving them up: the Cardinal is treated more ſeverely in them than in his own; but the Regent was determined to ruin entirely the reputation of the Cardinal de Retz, to make known his real character, and to diſguſt thoſe who were diſpoſed to imitate him. The Memoirs of Joly did not produce this effect, being written in a manner leſs pleaſing than thoſe of the Cardinal, they brought an odium upon

upon the author: he was looked upon as an ungrateful and faithleſs ſervant, who injured the reputation of him who had for a conſiderable time given him bread: the Frankneſs of the Cardinal had, on the contrary, intereſted people in his behalf; and notwithſtanding every thing that was done, men of turbulent diſpoſitions continued to love him, and to imitate his conduct at the riſque of every thing that could befall them; and no perſon ever declared himſelf in favour of M. Joly.

ESSAY XVIII.

HENRY OF LORRAINE's CHARACTER, AND ATTEMPT ON THE SOVEREIGNTY OF NAPLES.

MUCH about the time when the Cardinal de Retz was uſeleſsly employed in intrigues, a conſiderable perſonage of the family of Lorraine, undertook to ſupport the revolt of a country to which his anceſtors had really had ſome pretenſions: but titles are not ſufficient to pretend to great poſſeſſions; force, abilities, and fortunate events, are neceſſary to recover and preſerve them.

Henry of Lorraine, *Duke of Guiſe*, grandſon to Henry the firſt, who was aſſaſſinated at Blois, in 1588, full of vivacity, enterpriſing but unſteady, being at Rome in 1649, heard of the Neapolitan revolt, and thought himſelf deſtined to take advantage of it; he remembered the part his anceſtors had acted in France, under the reigns of Francis

Francis I. Henry II. and thoſe of the children of the laſt. He imagined it would be ſtill more eaſy for him to ſucceed in a leſſer theatre: with this idea he reſolved to put himſelf at the head of the Neapolitans, and eaſily obtained the honour of being their commander. Until he could give them ſuccours of men and money, he could not hope for the ſupport of any power, except that of France, and it was rather on account of the hatred ſhe bore the Spaniards, and a wiſh to encreaſe their difficulties, than with the idea of making him a powerful ſovereign, that ſhe would protect him.—Government was not ſorry to keep at a diſtance the man who bore the great name of Guiſe, which ſixty years before had ſhook the crown upon the head of the weak Henry III. but it was thought adviſeable not to buy this abſence too dear.

The Duke of Guiſe was endowed with all the gifts of nature; tall and erect, his features regular, his phyſiognomy happy and graceful; there was a nobleneſs in his countenance, manner and converſation, which captivated the heart; his mind was

adorned, if not by means of ſerious ſtudies, at leaſt by a great deal of reading; he ſpoke ſeveral languages in their greateſt purity, eſpecially the French and Italian: he was brave even to intrepidity and temerity,—knew enough of the art of war, although he had not been commander in chief,—and of politics, although he had never been charged with any important or difficult negociation. He ſeemed born to have what was ſaid of his grandfather and great grandfather, applied to him: "That in a numerous court where the princes of Guiſe appeared, the reſt of the nobility ſeemed in compariſon to be nothing more than common people." But otherwiſe he had defects, which are but too common to thoſe of his birth and rank: he thought himſelf ſo deſtined to great affairs, that he undertook them inconſiderately, and ſupported them with more haughtineſs than care and attention: he perceived when it was too late, the faults he had committed, but he would never avow them, and ſtrove rather to hide or defend, than repair them. Until he was thirty-two years of age, the time he went to Naples, love had been the misfortune of

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of his life. His father, who had retired into Tuſcany to avoid the perſecutions of the Cardinal de Richelieu, (who took care not to ſuffer in France, a man, whom it had been propoſed in the States General of the League, to make a King) had made him renounce the Archbiſhopric of Rheims, to marry in 1639, a princeſs of Gonzague; from whom he ſeparated two years afterwards, to marry at Bruſſells the Counteſs of Boſſut, widow of a Seigneur of the houſe of Hennin.

On his return to France in 1643, after the death of Lewis XIII. he became violently in love with Mademoiſelle de Pons, who joined to the advantages of the moſt illuſtrious birth, had every charm which can render a female agreeable. Knowing that he could not tempt her otherwiſe than by the offer of his hand and brilliant fortune, he undertook to make at Rome his ſecond marriage void, as he had done the firſt; but he found in this ſome very great difficulties: he brought his cauſe before the Rota, the firſt tribunal of the capital of the Chriſtian World, at the time the revolt at Naples

began, in 1646, under the government, or rather the tyranny of the Duke of Arcos. This Vice-Roy had impoſed burthenſome taxes upon the articles of conſumption; the populace undertook to get the impoſts taken off, and had at firſt for its leader a man of the loweſt extraction, his name Thomas Aniello. As vile a chief as he was, he ſoon became too conſiderable to be deſpiſed: after ſpeaking in a haughty tone without being attended to, he forced the palace of the Vice-Roy, pillaged it, ſeized him by the muſtache, and the Duke of Arcos thought himſelf happy in retiring to the Caſtle of Saint Elme. It was then neceſſary that Spaniſh haughtineſs ſhould have recourſe to all the artifices of Italian policy. The Vice-Roy employed the Archbiſhop and ſome Seigneurs of the country, whoſe names were dear to the Neopolitans; but the people perceived that ſome of theſe betrayed them, and that others acted with duplicity. They perſiſted in their revolt, which became more and more dangerous, on account of their being more animated and miſtruſtful. They declared Mas or Thomas Aniello their chief, and this man was for fifteen days in the

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month of July 1647, abſolute maſter in Naples: nothing could be more ridiculous than this kind of royalty; the exterior appearance of the monarch, and that of the court, exhibited the moſt ridicuous farce; but thoſe who ſaw it played too near, muſt have trembled, of whatever deſcription or party they might be, if they had any thing to loſe. The Vice-Roy was wholly intent upon deſtroying Mas Aniello: he endeavoured to get him aſſaſſinated, in which he could not at firſt ſucceed: it is thought that he contrived to give him a potion which had an effect upon his brain; perhaps the greatneſs of the enterprize and the uncertainty of ſucceſs had this effect. However this may be, Mas Aniello, after committing great follies, was maſſacred by his own ſervants: the people were delighted with it the firſt day, treated his body with indignity, and ſoon after regretted his loſs.

The Vice-Roy ſeeing the rebels without a commander, thought he could undertake any thing: he was guilty of new indiſcretions, and the people perceived themſelves in

in want of another chief: they appointed one whom they took from a quite different claſs, this was the Prince of Maſſa, of the houſe of Toralte. He had ſignaliſed himſelf in war; but the Court of Madrid being jealous of his reputation and abilities, had obliged him to live in his own country as a ſimple individual: he was now old and much afflicted with the gout. As it was known that he was greatly diſpleaſed with the Spaniards, the people called out loudly for him to become their general,—he accepted this delicate commiſſion; but he ſoon perceived that he could not well command thoſe who did not know how to obey. He obtained twice for the people conditions reaſonable enough; in order that he might have nothing more to do than to take ſuch meaſures as were neceſſary to oblige the Vice-Roy to fulfill them: but the people neglected the means of making themſelves reſpected. The Prince of Maſſa ſtood his ground for three months, notwithſtanding all the diſagreeable circumſtances attached to his ſituation; he wiſhed that the people and the nobility ſhould be united againſt the Spaniards their common ene-

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mies; but on the contrary, these two classes equally discontented, suspected each other: finally, he thought that the best thing he could do would be to disengage himself from a burthen which lay heavy upon him, and to place it upon the shoulders of a stranger who had neither relations nor friends in the city; and who could not be suspected by the populace which had mutinied.

Things were in this situation when it was learnt that the *Duke of Guise*, who was at Rome, had views upon Naples. He appeared to be the most fit man to command a revolt, not as a sovereign, but as the protector of a rising republic. The Duke accepted the command upon this footing, and took for his model the Count of Nassau, who, in defending the rising republic of the United Provinces, brought things to such a pass as to establish and maintain it.

Whilst he was taking these measures, and writing to France to obtain succours from Anne of Austria and the Cardinal Mazarine, the new republicans drew up a manifest, begging the support of foreign powers;

ers; but in a little time after, they maſſacred the Prince of Maſſa upon the moſt falſe and unjuſt accuſations. After a ſhort anarchy, the people elected for chief *Gennare* (or Janvier) *Auneſe*, a man of low birth, and without any other merit than that of bravery, and a great hatred againſt the Spaniards; beſides he was ugly to a ridiculous degree, brutal, irreligious, and had none of thoſe mental qualities which make men amiable. Auneſe having audaciouſly poſſeſſed himſelf of authority, preſerved it in ſpite of all murmurs and diſcontent, when the *Duke of Guiſe* having received anſwers from France, dictated by the Cardinal Mazarine, and in which the Duke was amuſed with hopes, in order that he might amuſe the rebels, he reſolved to ſet off for Naples, where he arrived like a true hero of knight errantry. He embarked without much ſuite, in a felucca, paſſed undiſcovered in the day time, through the Spaniſh fleet which blocked up the port of Naples. But as ſoon as he appeared in the city, his noble air and manners left the Neapolitans no room to doubt, that he was the heir of thoſe princes of the houſe of Anjou, who had reigned for

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ſo long a time over the two Sicilies: he declared, that he returned to the inheritance of his forefather, not to govern as a tyrant, but to protect his people, who were become republicans. He announced to them that a French fleet was to ſail from Toulon, to ſuccour Naples, and he was declared Generaliſſimo, even over Auneſe, though he acted conjointly with him. Theſe two perſons of ſo different a turn and character acted, for ſix weeks or two months, ſeemingly in concert; but it plainly appeared, that Auneſe was the man of the people, and that the Duke was more fit for the illuſtrious and great. All his manners were noble; he was gallant with the women, and generous to the gentlemen of the country: this alone, would perhaps have ruined him.

At length the French Fleet arrived, and appeared ready to engage that of Spain. This circumſtance encreaſed the credit of the *Duke of Guiſe*; they offered him the title of King, which he refuſed; but he conſented to be proclaimed Generaliſſimo and Duke of Naples, with a ſovereign power, which at firſt was to continue for ſeven

ſeven years, but was ſoon afterwards declared perpetual. Auneſe appeared to comply, and ſeemed to be no more than a private ſubject, or an officer of the new ſovereign. The Generaliſſimo ordered money to be coined, upon which were put his name and arms. The moſt brilliant time of the *Duke of Guiſe* at Naples, was the laſt month of the year 1647, and the two firſt of 1648; but the French fleet ſoon retired, without having come to an engagement with the Spaniards, or having done the Neopolitans the leaſt eſſential ſervice: the French left ſome of their officers in Naples, and things were in this ſituation when the fleet diſappeared. The confidence of the Neopolitans was ſoon diminiſhed; in vain did the *Duke of Guiſe* and the French, who were attached to him, perform prodigies of valour: Auneſe ſtrove ſecretly to deſtroy their reputation, in which he ſucceeded. The Prince and the ancient chief of the people ſoon ſought each other's life, perceiving that the ruin of one was neceſſary to the ſafety of the other. The Spaniards made offers to the *Duke of Guiſe*; but he knew they were only feigned, and made to render him ſuſpected.

pected. They gained ſecretly the perfidious Auneſe; this traitor gave them poſſeſſion of the Tourion of the Carmes, a kind of fortreſs, of which he was maſter; and whilſt the *Duke of Guiſe* was employed in attacking diſtant poſts, Naples returned to the dominion of Spain: this was in the month of 1648.

Guiſe ſupported to the laſt his courage, firmneſs and generoſity: he made uſeleſs efforts to get into Naples, and was at length taken priſoner, after having defended himſelf like a lion. The Spaniards triumphed at his capture, and whilſt they paid him the honours due to a priſoner of the firſt rank, they deliberated in council, whether or not they ſhould take away his life. A Machiavelian politician voted for this odious reſolution: but Don Juan of Auſtria, and the firſt Spaniſh nobility had generoſity enough to think differently: the Duke was ſent into Spain, where he remained four years a priſoner. At the end of this period, the Spaniards who ſtrove to foment the troubles of the Fronde, with which France was agitated, thought that the *Duke of Guiſe* was

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an inſtrument proper to augment the diſturbances in the kingdom; and that he would act againſt France with as much audaciouſneſs and activity as he had done to ſupport the revolt of Naples. They were deceived in their opinion; *Guiſe* was incapable of contributing to the evils of his real country, however diſcontented he might be with Mazarine, who had ſcandalouſly deceived him; he would not revenge himſelf by betraying the young King, who at ten years old could not be ſuſpected of having had any part in the wrongs his miniſter had done.

During the impriſonment of the *Duke of Guiſe* in Spain, Mazarine made an attempt which proved more fruitleſs than that of *Guiſe*; he had ſent out a fleet, in which the Prince Thomas of Savoy, whoſe ſon had married the niece of the firſt Miniſter, had failed. The wiſhes of this Prince were to reign over Naples, and Mazarine was more warm in his efforts to aid him, than he had been to ſuccour the *Duke of Guiſe*. But the man he protected had not the merit of him whom he had abandoned, and things were not

not in ſo favourable a ſituation: this ſecond enterprize failed.

Guiſe being returned to France, propoſals were made him to attempt a third expedition. Government armed at Toulon in 1654, another fleet deſtined to bring about a new revolution in Naples. *Guiſe* did not heſitate to embark; but he was as badly ſeconded in this laſt expedition as he had been in the firſt; and it was equally unſucceſsful, although the duke took the city and the caſtle of Caſtellamare, of which he kept poſſeſſion for ſome time. Diſcouraged by ſo many misfortunes, and diſguſted with every kind of ambition, Henry of Lorraine was promoted in 1655, to the place of great Chamberlain of France; and he confined himſelf for the remainder of his life, to the peaceful functions of this great office of the crown. He performed the duties of his office at the king's marriage, and at the entry of the queen Marie Théreſe into Paris, with all the dignity, magnificence, and gracefulneſs of a deſcendant of the dukes of *Guiſe*, in the preceding century; he commanded, or rather conducted one of

the tournaments in the famous carouſal of 1663; and appeared worthy to be upon a footing with the great Condé, who immediately preceded him.* He muſt at this moment have recollected all the greatneſs he enjoyed during ſome months at Naples; but he had bid adieu to all ſerious affairs, as well in love as in ambition; he thought no more of Mademoiſelle de Pons; yet he would never be reconciled to his legitimate wife, formerly the Counteſs of Boſſut. This lady ſurvived him; ſhe lived till the year 1670. The duke died in 1664, at fifty years of age without poſterity.

We have the Memoirs of the duke of *Guiſe* during the revolt of Naples, written by different hands, and with oppoſite intentions. The two works appeared in a ſhort time after the death of the hero. The author

* In this magnificent Carouſal, the duke of Guiſe commanded the tournament of American ſavages; his troop was the moſt ſingular of all, and as brilliant as any of the others. The Duke, under the title of *King of* America, had painted upon his eſcutcheon a Lion couchant, and at the top an Eagle, with theſe words for device, *Altiora præſumo*. "I "undertake the greateſt things."

author of the firſt was the Count Raymond of Modena and Avignon, who, being attached to the duke, went with him to Naples, where he became Major General of his troops, and defended the city of Averſa, between Naples and Capua, againſt the Spaniards. It appears that *M. de Guiſe* had a great friendſhip for this officer, but that towards the end of the time he ſtayed at Naples, he had reaſon to complain of him. Modena, apparently to juſtify himſelf, animadverted freely upon ſome of the faults of his general, and diſcovered certain defects which the duke might have in his character. The work of the count of Modena appeared in 1667, under the title of *Hiſtoire des Revolutions de la Ville de Naples (en* 1647). The following year, *Saint Yon*, an old ſecretary of the duke's, publiſhed another in oppoſition, under the title of *Memoires de M. le Duc de Guiſe.* This work is written in the name of the prince himſelf, whether the manuſcript may have been found among his papers, or that the Saint Yon may have given it this turn, in order to make the memoirs more intereſting. He acquits the duke of all the indiſcretions which are im-

puted to him in the preceding work, and repreſents him in the moſt favourable light, yet in ſuch a manner, that it appears as if the prince himſelf ſpoke, and was modeſt enough in giving his own eulogium. This makes theſe memoirs intereſting, and marks them with the characters of truth. The memoirs written by Modena, are not ſo much ſo; yet who knows if it be not the latter which contain the real truth? Who can ſay, which of two ocular witneſſes, that have been equally in a ſituation to know what paſſed, and yet have given contrary teſtimonies, is to be preferred? Their contradictions can only be founded upon prejudices; but who can diſcover the effects of them, eſpecially after ſuch a length of time!

ESSAY

ESSAY XIX.

CARDINAL AMBOISE's MINISTERIAL CONDUCT.

ON reading the life of the *Cardinal Amboiſe*, I found great room for reflection upon the glory and reputation of kings and their miniſters. There are reigns which owe every thing to miniſters, ſuch as that of Lewis XIII. under the adminiſtration of Richelieu; and there are others wherein kings and miniſters have concurred ſo well together, as to make the people equally obliged to them; ſuch were the reigns of Henry IV. and Lewis XIV. It may be ſaid, that Sully would have done nothing ſo well had he had any other maſter than Henry IV. and that Henry would not have been ſo great a monarch without Sully. Thus Colbert would never have had ſuch extended views, nor have executed the great things he did, if Lewis XIV. had not inſpired and ſupported him. It appears to be proved by the reign of Lewis XII. that ſometimes a

good king alone acts well, and that a minister is no more than the executor of his wise decrees. Yet the minister partakes of the glory, merit, and wisdom of his master; especially when the latter is prudent enough not to be jealous of the reputation of his minister.

The *Cardinal Amboise*, had in my opinion, no other virtues than those of his master; and Lewis XII. possessed such as acquired him the flattering title of *Father of his people*. *George d'Amboise* had wit, abilities and address; he used them principally to make his fortune, and it was not his fault that he did not make it still more considerable than it really was; but I am of opinion, that all the merit of the reign of Lewis XII. is due to the monarch, and the blame to the first minister. Lewis XII. was a mild and good man, but fearing to act according to his own manner of thinking, he asked advice of others; and I suspect the *Cardinal Amboise* of being more artful and political in his counsels, than candid and zealous for the real interests of his prince and country. In order to be well convinced of this, it is necessary

ceſſary to examine one after another, the events of the reign of Lewis XII. it will not be very difficult to diſtinguiſh the intentions of the Sovereign from thoſe of the *Cardinal*.

George d'Amboiſe, was the youngeſt of nine ſons which were borne to *Pierre d'Amboiſe*, Seigneur of *Chaumont*, firſt gentleman of the bed chamber to Charles VII. and Lewis XI. All of them lived long enough to become very conſiderable in the ſtate. Three were the roots of as many branches; five were biſhops, and the laſt was grand maſter of the order of St. John of Jeruſalem. They had eight ſiſters, two of whom were abbeſſes, and the other ſix married to the greateſt Seigneurs of the kingdom. *George* attached himſelf early in life to the houſe of Orleans. He had ſcarcely finiſhed his ſtudies when he was made chaplain to Lewis XI. although he was not yet in holy orders; his youth did not prevent his being elected in 1475, *Biſhop of Montauban*. Towards the end of the reign of Lewis XI. the court being divided into factions, he joined the party of the

houſe of Orleans which he never afterwards quitted. Madame de Beaujeu, eldeſt daughter of Lewis XI. to whom this monarch on his death bed, had confided the care of the young king Charles VIII. and, I may ſay, the regency and government of the kingdom, ſoon became acquainted with the ſentiments of the young biſhop of *Montauban*, for which ſhe could not forgive him. The prelate was juſtly ſuſpected of being the accomplice of ſome perſons who attempted to make themſelves maſters of the perſon of Charles; he prattled with him, making him recite his prayers, or rather he pretended to make him do it. The young monarch expreſſed to him ſome deſire of being releaſed from the power of his eldeſt ſiſter. The biſhop informed the duke of Orleans of it; the king's eſcape, and conſequently the diſgrace of Madame de Beaujeu, were determined upon, when in the interim, ſhe was advertiſed of what had paſſed. She immediately cauſed the young biſhop, who had juſt been elected archbiſhop of Narbonne, to be arreſted. The duke of Orleans would have been in the ſame ſituation, had he not taken refuge in

Bretagne.

Bretagne. However, the impriſonment of *Amboiſe*, was not of long duration; he proteſted his innocence; to prove which, he appealed to the king himſelf, who not wiſhing to make depoſitions againſt him, he got rid of the affair.

Lewis, *Duke of Orleans*, was taken priſoner at the battle of *St. Aubin*, and conducted to the great tower of *Bourges*. The archbiſhop of Narbonne, conſtant in his attachment to the duke, uſed every effort to procure him his liberty; and when his place of chaplain to the king was reſtored to him, he had recourſe to the ſame means as before. He perſuaded Charles VIII. that it was equally juſt and conducive to his intereſt, to pardon the firſt prince of the blood, and to take him out of priſon unknown to Madame de Beaujeu. The king followed his advice, and went himſelf to open the gates of the tower of Bourges for the Duke of Orleans. This prince was not ungrateful, for he contributed to the marriage of the king, with the heireſs of Bretagne, although he was himſelf much enamoured with her, and that ſhe had an

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equal paſſion for him. After the marriage, Madame de Beaujeu, became Ducheſs of Bourbon, quitted public affairs, and left the court.

The duke of Orleans had the government of Normandy, and ſoon afterwards found means to change *Amboiſe* from the archbiſhopric of Narbonne, to that of Rouen; and declared him at the ſame time, his Lieutenant General, and Commander in Normandy. *Amboiſe* employed himſelf at firſt in reſtoring tranquillity to this province, which was infeſted with thieves and highwaymen; in this he ſeconded the intentions of the duke of Orleans; he regulated alſo his dioceſe with zeal and wiſdom; but he ſoon thought himſelf obliged to go to Italy, upon the ſervice of the duke his protector; he accompanied him into the Milaneſe, and never left him during the two laſt years, 1494 and 1495, which the prince paſſed there. The laſt year was terminated by the ſiege of Novara, which Lewis XII. courageouſly ſuſtained. *Amboiſe* gave him not only political but military advice; it is even ſaid, that he fought in perſon, as well as

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ſeveral other biſhops. On his return to France, he retook the adminiſtration of Normandy. It cannot be denied, that he cauſed complaints and murmurs, and that he was accuſed of being a tyrant; but his prince defended him againſt this accuſation, which undoubtedly he thought an unjuſt one, becauſe it was very far from his own way of thinking. Charles VIII. died in 1498. Lewis XII. aſcended the throne, and *Amboiſe* was made his firſt miniſter, with ſo much the more confidence and power, as the good king, who was willing to forget the injuries which had been done to the duke of Orleans, made it his duty to reward thoſe who had ſerved him. Let us examine at preſent what paſſed during the firſt twelve years of the new reign, and to the death of the Cardinal; let us alſo examine the part which both the one and the other had in them.

The firſt ſervice which the new Cardinal did his maſter, was to diſſolve his marriage with the ſecond daughter of Lewis XI. and facilitate the means of his eſpouſing the widow of his predeceſſor. It muſt be allowed,

lowed, that this ſervice was great, and at once conformable to good policy, and the real inclinations of Lewis XII; but to bring it about, it was neceſſary to manage the worſt Pope that was ever at the head of the church of Rome (Alexander VI); and this was carried ſo far, that the king thought himſelf obliged to receive with the greateſt honours *Cæſar Borgia*, baſtard of that unworthy pontif, and to let him marry Charlotte d'Albret, one of the greateſt matches in the kingdom, and to confer upon him dignities, and make him grants in France. If there were any political reaſons which authoriſed this conduct in Lewis XII. they were certainly different from his way of thinking; but the miniſter who perſuaded him, had more conſiderable perſonal intereſts in view; he wiſhed to form himſelf a party in the ſacred college, and conceived already the project of ſucceeding Alexander VI. upon the pontifical throne. This ambitious idea made *Amboiſe* engage his maſter in the Italian expedition. Anne of Bretagne, was almoſt thrown into deſpair by it; but her obligations to *Amboiſe* were too conſiderable to permit her to contradict,

tradict, openly, his opinion, or to oppose his interest with the king.

The first campaigns were favourable, Lewis triumphed over Ludovico Sforza; but the latter caused soon after a revolt in Milan; he was punished for this and taken prisoner, as well as his brother the Cardinal Ascanio. *Amboise* hoping to obtain voices in the next conclave, procured the liberty of his brother Cardinal; in which it cannot be denied, that he committed a great fault, as he gave a chief to the party in opposition to France. The Cardinal was made governor of the Milanese and he pardoned, in the king's name, the people of Milan, their revolt; this parade was still necessary to his plans of ambition. He was afterwards employed to accommodate a difference between the republics of Pisa and Florence; he gave his judgment in favour of the latter, and besieged the former in person.

Alexander VI. was still alive, but very old, and as mischievous as ever; but *Amboise* not wishing to lose sight, for a long time, of the court of France, returned to it in quality of Legate, which gave him an opportunity

portunity of drawing immenſe ſums from the clergy and people, without its being known: he poſſeſſed but one benefice, which was the archbiſhopric of Rouen; but he diſpoſed of others in favour of his relations and friends, and to Italian Cardinals whom he kept in his intereſt. He determined Lewis XII. to engage again in a war in Italy, upon the faith of a treaty with Ferdinand of Arragon, one of the moſt perfidious of princes. This was an unfortunate war for the French; they were deceived, and could not fail of being ſo, by the king of Arragon, the pope, and his worthleſs ſon Cæſar. Many of the French diſtinguiſhed themſelves by heroic but uſeleſs actions. It became neceſſary at length to declare war againſt Ferdinand; a freſh army was ſent into Italy, and *Amboiſe* managed ſo well, that the pope was reſtored to his former confidence in this ſecond expedition. The Cardinal was at Rome with the French troops when Alexander the VI. died; he then made known the project he had formed of ſucceeding him. He entered the conclave, was deceived and duped by the Italian cardinals. Francis Picolomini, nephew to

pope

pope Pius II. was elected under the name of Pius III. and he lived but twenty-five days. The hopes of *George d'Amboiſe* were perhaps renewed by this event; but they were ſoon deſtroyed a ſecond time in a more open manner. Julian II. was elected, and the Cardinal *Amboiſe* ran the riſk of loſing his life. The new pope was the declared enemy of the firſt miniſter, as well as that of France. The French loſt once more the kingdom of Naples, and all Italy. Borgia, whom *Amboiſe* thought might be of uſe to him, was taken priſoner and conducted into Spain, from whence he made his eſcape. He commanded afterwards a French army againſt the king of Arragon in Navarre, where he was killed, leaving no other reputation behind him, but that of an odious and abominable heroiſm, which has diſhonoured even his machiavelian panegyriſt.

Amboiſe, forced to content himſelf with his place of firſt miniſter in France, engaged the king again in new treaties and wars, of which this monarch was the dupe. Ferdinand of Arragon, married Germaine de Foix, niece of Lewis XII. but he was

not leſs his enemy on account of the marriage; this alliance became another, means which the king of Arragon acquired, of deceiving the king of France.

The year following, 1506, it happened fortunately, that *Amboiſe* permitted a fault to be repaired, of which he had been the author. The king and the queen Anne had promiſed their daughter Claude in marriage to Charles, commonly called Count of Luxembourg, and who was afterwards the Emperor Charles the fifth. This foreign prince would have gained, by his intended marriage, the dutchy of Bretagne, and pretenſions to the Milaneſe. The States General were aſſembled, who demanded loudly of the king that the alliance ſhould not take place, but that the princeſs ſhould be married to Francis of Angoulême, preſumptive heir to the crown, who reigned afterwards in the name of Francis I. It may eaſily be judged, that the Emperor Maximilian was provoked at ſeeing ſo fine an occaſion eſcape; however, he diſſembled, and *Amboiſe*, on his part, flattering himſelf without reaſon, that he ſhould regain the pope,

pope, undoubtedly with the idea of ſucceeding him, perſuaded the king to aid Julien II. to ſeize upon Bologna. Julien was ungrateful, as might have been expected.

The Genoeſe revolted againſt Lewis XII. who repaſſed the mountains to ſubdue them; he treated them with that mildneſs which was natural to his character.

In 1508, was formed the famous league of Cambray; a great and important negociation, of which all the honour would have fallen upon the Cardinal of *Amboiſe*, if any honour could have reſulted from it; but it was at the ſame time the moſt unjuſt and ill contrived treaty that could poſſibly have been made. It is remarkable, that in the council where this league was determined upon, there was but one man who had courage enough to ſhew the injuſtice of it, and the dangerous conſequences it might be attended with; this was Stephen Poncher, keeper of the ſeals, and who died archbiſhop of Lens. His opinion made an impreſſion upon the wiſe and judicious Lewis

XII; but, unfortunately for France, the Cardinal got the better of him. The king put himſelf at the head of his army, and gave battle at Agnadelloa, contrary to the advice of his council, and even of the cardinal. The good prince imagined that God was for him, ſo much was he deceived upon the juſtice of his cauſe. He gained this battle, but his affairs were not benefited by it. The predictions of Stephen Poncher, were but too well verified. Julien II. leagued himſelf with the enemies of France, and even with the Venetians, in order to cruſh the French.

In the middle of this diſaſter, *Amboiſe* conceived a new project of ambition; he reſolved to depoſe Julien II. and occupy his place, or at leaſt be declared Patriarch and Sovereign Pontiff in France. Death put an end to his ambitious deſigns; he expired at Lyons the 25th of May, 1510. Four days before he died, Lewis XII. paid him a viſit, when *Amboiſe*, ſhedding a torrent of tears, made to the monarch a general and miniſterial cōnfeſſion; he acknowledged to him, that he was going to leave a conſiderable fortune, in the acquiſition

acquiſition of which he had to reproach himſelf with many things; he ſaid poſitively that he had taken nothing from the ſubjects of the king; but confeſſed that he had for a long time paſt received a penſion of fifty thouſand ducats from different princes and republics of Italy; and thirty thouſand ducats from the Florentines alone. He had, moreover, received conſiderable preſents, and amaſſed immenſe ſums; he beſeeched the king to permit him to diſpoſe of all he was poſſeſſed of, and the good Lewis XII. granted him even more than he aſked.

He made uſe of this liberty in his laſt teſtament, the firſt article of which is ſingular enough, and is as follows: "I bequeath "to my nephew, George of Amboiſe, my "Archbiſhopric of Rouen, and all my "moveables, which are valued at two mil-"lions of gold, together with the furni-"ture of Gaillon, and the convenience of "the houſe, ſuch as it is. *Item*, to my "nephew Monſieur the Grand Maſter, "chief of my arms, an hundred and fifty "thouſand ducats of gold; my handſome

" cup, valued at two thouſand crowns;*
" one hundred pieces of gold, each of them
" worth five hundred crowns; my gold
" plate, and five thouſand marks in ſilver
" plate. *Item*, all my patrimony to the
" ſon of the Grand Maſter."

He left conſiderable legacies to his other nephews and ſiſter; ten thouſand livres to the four mendicant orders, to ſay maſſes for the repoſe of his ſoul; and wherewith to marry an hundred and fifty girls, in honour of the hundred and fifty pſalms of which the pſalter is compoſed. His funeral was the moſt ſumptuous which had ever been given to any prelate; his heart was left with the Celeſtins of Lyons; and his body carried to Rouen, accompanied by eleven thouſand prieſts, twelve hundred prelates, twelve hundred gentlemen, &c.

Hiſtorians add to the recital of theſe obſequies, a great eulogium of this Cardinal miniſter: they ſay, that *during his adminiſtration*,

* Wherever crowns are ſpoken of in this manner, half crowns are to be underſtood.

ſtration, every kind of happineſs reigned in the ſtate; that France was never ſo populous, fruitful, rich or well cultivated as under his prudent management; ſo much ſo, that as long as he lived, war was baniſhed from the kingdom and carried on in other places. This eulogium is juſtly due to the reign of Lewis XII. but is it equally ſo to the adminiſtration of the Cardinal *Amboiſe?* Lewis would not by any means charge his people with new impoſts, but the Cardinal made him undertake expenſive wars; he propoſed to him a means milder in appearance than that of encreaſing taxes, but whoſe conſequences may be ſaid to have become more pernicious; this was the ſale of offices. The chancellor Duprat, is generally accuſed of being the author of this venality: it is true that he was the firſt who regulated the ſale; but the Cardinal *Amboiſe* began to introduce it, and it was only more dangerous before it became general and regular. Its abuſes might be greater and more profitable to the miniſter who granted the permiſſion, and through whoſe hands the money paſſed.

The Cardinal *Amboiſe* ruined the Marſhall de Gié of the houſe of Rohan; and it is generally agreed, that it was purely on account of his being jealous of the favour he was in with the young Francis, heir to the crown: this kind of conduct in a courtier and miniſter, is not leſs odious on account of its being rather common. *Amboiſe* might have hoped to outlive his maſter, for he was about the ſame age; but the monarch was of a much weaker complexion. The Cardinal not having ſucceeded to the government of the church, continued to govern France. There is reaſon to believe, that under another king, he would have made a leſſer ſhew of goodneſs and virtue; but it was neceſſary to render that homage to the virtues of Lewis XII. and appear to ſecond his good intentions; they were pure in the heart and character of this father of his people, but I think them very ſuſpicious in thoſe of his favourite. One of the virtues of Lewis XII. was gratitude, and he would have been very ſorry to have been wanting in it. He had great obligations to *Amboiſe*; from hence came the repeated acts of complaiſance and deference to his advice. Lewis

was

was œconomical and exact in his affairs, and *Amboiſe* appeared to be the ſame in order to pleaſe him. Lewis XII. has been accuſed of avarice, but it appears that gifts, penſions and ordinary appointments never ſuffered the leaſt delay during his reign. He was liberal to the Cardinal only; yet the miniſter was adroit enough not to obtain any very remarkable favours, but made his fortune ſecretly. Several miniſters have been as wiſe, able, and reſerved as *Amboiſe*; no king was ever ſo good, ſo juſt, and ſo well diſpoſed as Lewis XII.

ESSAY XVII.

ON THE CHARACTER AND MEMOIRS OF SULLY.

I MAY boaſt of having made known the merit of *Sully*, to many people who did not before ſufficiently eſteem this Miniſter of Henry IV. His Memoirs have been written under the title of *Economies Royales*, by four of his Secretaries, whom he had retained after his retreat, and who made a part of his numerous court. Although theſe Memoirs contain excellent things, which make us underſtand how great a part *Sully* had in the glory and happineſs of the reign of Henry IV. they are badly written, are incoherent, and charged with diſagreeable calculations and details. An edition in folio which is called *V. V. Verts*, is particularly eſteemed, becauſe there are in it ſome anecdotes of particular families, who deſired afterwards they might be ſuppreſſed. I engaged, at leaſt indirectly, a man of ſenſe, and who writes well, to digeſt the Memoirs of

of *Sully*, and to render them more pleaſant to read.* I am perſuaded, that when this great man ſhall be better known, people in general will be as enthuſiaſtic as I am, in their admiration of him. I am become paſſionately fond of him; I have got his portrait framed, and have placed it before my ſecretaire, to have it continually before my eyes, in order to call to mind his features, principles and conduct. I approve of the noble and ſimple manner in which he made his fortune, by the beſt of all means: by ſerving well his maſter he could not fail of pleaſing him; by pleaſing him he deſerved to obtain conſiderable gratuities, but he never ſucked the blood of the people: he never received any thing from foreigners to betray his prince and country. It cannot be ſaid that a man who contrived to ſave his king thirty-ſix millions of livres out of his treaſures made depredations upon the finances. I even admire his retreat; it was as great and noble as the means by which he made his fortune: he had a numerous family,

* The Memoirs of Sully, arranged methodically, by the Abbé de C. Ecluſe, appeared in three volumes in 4to. in 1747.

mily, lived in his caſtles like a prince, was reſpected by his relations, and gave ſubſiſtance to thoſe who became old in his ſervice. I ſee nothing in all this but what is highly praiſe worthy. It was juſt that he ſhould make a figure according to the titles he had acquired by having deſerved them: he remembered the good he had done, and wiſhed ſtill to ſerve the ſtate; but he did not wiſh to be harraſſed with the cares of it. A Miniſter out of place is no longer ſtunned with the buzzing of flatterers, who ſtrive to perſuade him to grant unjuſt favours: but he judges calmly and in peace the conduct of his ſucceſſors, and of the good or bad ſucceſs with which their meaſures are attended. He is no longer before the curtain; but if he remains in his country, the theatre is not at ſo great a diſtance from him as to prevent his deciding upon the merit of the actors.

I even like the manner in which, politically ſpeaking, *Sully* underſtood his religion: he was a Calviniſt, and without doubt, he was ſo from conviction; but very far from being either a fanatic or rebel,—even after the death of Henry IV. he refuſed to put himſelf

himſelf at the head of the Huguenot party, as ſoon as a revolt became in queſtion. It was not required of him to ſacrifice his opinion in matter of faith; and on his part, he never made his manner of thinking a pretext to diſturb the public repoſe. His firſt profeſſion was that of a ſoldier and engineer, and the firſt ſciences he ſtudied were thoſe of war, gunnery, and fortification. He learnt them well, and in the exerciſe of them he never loſt that coolneſs and combination which are equally neceſſary in war, and in the adminiſtration of affairs. It was undoubtedly a long time before he ſuſpected that he was deſtined to be a Miniſter of State and Superintendant of Finances. But let us not deceive ourſelves in thinking that political principles require much ſtudy; when a man has a turn for great affairs, he ſoon ſurpaſſes his maſters in this kind of ſtudy: moreover he obtains a perfect knowledge of them by practice. With reſpect to the adminiſtration of finances, it is a matter of calculation; it is neceſſary to form a plan, and it ſoon appears whether or not profit will ariſe from purſuing it. A financier muſt not be daunted by the multiplicity of branches

branches which he has to make fruitful.—When he has found a central point, it is the buſineſs of clerks to combine theſe proceedings with the principles of the Miniſter; but they muſt be conſtant and invariable, and have been formed before he entered into place; for it is too late to tamper when once he is charged with the moſt important adminiſtration.

M. de Sully has been reproached with being too ſevere; but who knows if he were ſo by character, or by a kind of neceſſity, which the conduct of his maſter Henry impoſed upon him? This Prince, the beſt who ever lived, was weak, often in love, accuſtomed moreover to ſeek expedients and reſources, ſuch as are found in the midſt of civil wars, and to recompenſe his partiſans, by giving them the ſpoils of his enemies. If *Sully* had left him to act he would have done more harm to his affairs than his Miniſter could have done good; but it was very neceſſary that *Sully* ſhould be negative, becauſe Henry IV. was generous, and that his generoſity ſtood in need of being kept within bounds. In matters of bounty, the King and

the Miniſter ſhould always underſtand each other, that either one or the other may appear difficult; according to the natural order of things, the maſter ſhould be ſo; but when he will not, the Miniſter is indiſpenſably obliged to put on that character. The beſt means of diminiſhing the embarraſſments of both, is to agree upon certain principles never to be departed from; for if once either the King or the Miniſter counteract them, they will be importuned for the moſt unjuſt gratifications, and will make themſelves enemies by the moſt reaſonable refuſals.

The character of *M. de Sully* was ſomething like that of Cato; but we need only read his Memoirs to be perſuaded, that his Catonian firmneſs was founded upon the real intereſts of the ſtate, and that neither humour nor malice had any thing to do with it. It even appears that he was a man of feeling, and ſeveral articles in his Memoirs prove it. We have reaſon to believe that his anecdotes are true, becauſe they were not contradicted by any cotemporary author; conſequently we ought to believe what he ſays of himſelf; part of it is as follows:

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he believed that it was better to gain the eſteem of little people, and to conſole them, than to be complaiſant to the great: he knew that theſe frequently abuſe the attentions which are paid them, and that the ſuffrages and applauſe of the former are the real foundation of the reputation and ſatisfaction of a good Miniſter.

He ſtudied but very little during his military or political life: he read in his retreat, but it was not, ſaid he, ſo much to ſtore his mind as to improve his reaſon. He protected and rewarded men of letters, but they had very little acceſs to him: he liſtened to every advice which was given him, but he looked upon no particular one as an infallible inſpiration, and did not adopt it till after mature reflection. How could he, who had ſo frequently reſiſted the orders of his maſter, ſubmit himſelf blindly to thoſe of others? He introduced the greateſt order into his private affairs; he ſaid, that the manner in which a Miniſter conducts his own affairs, ſhews how he will conduct thoſe of his maſter. In fact, although a man

man charged with the affairs of ſtate may have but little time to think of domeſtic details, he may always lay down certain principles for the government of his houſe and private affairs, as well as for the objects which are intereſting to the nation, and conſign the one to his ſteward as he does the other to his ſecretaries and clerks. There are none but little minds which trouble themſelves with minutiæ; great geniuſes adopt juſt and clear principles, and regulate their actions accordingly.

Nature had given *M. de Sully* an excellent conſtitution; his viſage was majeſtic, mild and agreeable; that ſeverity which appeared in his conduct was not written in his countenance; a proof that it was not natural to him, and that it was owing to circumſtances. He was temperate, ſlept little, and endured every kind of fatigue: the fatigues of war had accuſtomed him to thoſe of adminiſtration.

The reputation of *M. de Sully* was never, as I have before obſerved, ſo great as it

deſerved to be; but it will, on this account, be more brilliant and ſolid, when particular and perſonal prejudices being diſſipated, men ſhall judge of his adminiſtration by the great effects it produced. It was under him that the finances began to be regulated, commerce extended, and population encreaſed.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXI.

CHARACTER OF CARDINAL FLEURY, AND SULLY, COMPARED.

WE have at preſent a prime Miniſter *M. le Cardinal de Fleury*, who poſſeſſes a part of the virtues of *M. de Sully*—his principal qualities appear nevertheleſs to be of an inferior kind: but perhaps this difference is wholly due to their ſituations and the circumſtances of the times in which they lived. One was a military man, the other is an eccleſiaſtic: *Sully* had ſeen and experienced all the miſeries of a civil war; he had order and œconomy to re-eſtabliſh in every department; *M. de Fleury* has only to maintain that order which is already wiſely eſtabliſhed: finally *Sully*, met with contradictions from his maſter, and thinking himſelf obliged to reſiſt them, he was more attentive to oppoſe nothing but the public welfare to authority, which, except in this caſe, ought always to be deciſive. The Cardinal meets with no oppoſition, except upon

trifling ſubjects. I am perſuaded that he would reſiſt ſtronger ones; and it is perhaps a misfortune for him that he has not had ſuch to encounter.

Sully was the Miniſter of the nation, becauſe he loved it, and ſaw that it ſtood in need of aſſiſtance, and that it was neceſſary to repair its loſſes, and make it enjoy happineſs under a good King. Richelieu, on the contrary, was a brilliant Miniſter, and feared by a King, whoſe abſolute authority he eſtabliſhed, becauſe it was confided to him and remained in his hands. *Cardinal Fleury* is at the ſame time Miniſter of the King and of the nation, and the time will come, when juſtice will be done to him as well as to *M. de Sully*. It is ſaid, that his genius is not great, but we are in an age which does not require a man of that deſcription: he has at leaſt an amiable mind, a great knowlege of the world and the court, is agreeable and polite, even gallant with decency; nor does he act inconſiſtently with the gravity of any of the characters with which he is inveſted. His Miniſterial qualities are, juſtneſs of thinking, ſolidity in his views and intentions, frankneſs and

and ſincerity to ſtrangers; a policy refined enough, but not deceitful. He knows how to avoid the ſnares laid for him by courtiers, without uſing perfidious and machiavelian means; he takes care to hazard no uſeleſs expence, and eſpecially not to lead the nation on in the purſuit of chimerical objects; he ſhews much diſintereſtedneſs and moderation in his perſonal expences; he avoids all kind of pomp, thinking it more noble to live above it; his conduct in this reſpect is the ſhield which he oppoſes to thoſe who aſk him extraordinary favours, which would only ſerve to feed their luxury. Finally, this Miniſter ſeems calculated to encreaſe our happineſs without changing it: this is all we can deſire: for France is at preſent in a ſituation to ſay, *Let the Gods take nothing from me—this is all I aſk.*

ESSAY XXII.

ENCOMIUM OF M. DE CHAUVELIN, SUBMINISTER TO FLEURY.

THERE is at this time riſing under the eyes of the *Cardinal Fleury* a new Miniſter, whoſe merit and abilities it is not eaſy to appreciate, becauſe he does not act oſtenſibly; and whilſt in ſecret with a ſuperior, it is difficult to judge to which of the two, the ſucceſs of many affairs ought to be attributed. At preſent, he has but the rank of what was called, under the Cardinal de Richelieu, a *Sub-miniſter*: but if he be obliged to act according to the ideas of others, or at moſt improve them, it may be imagined, that on account of his extenſive knowlege, his application to buſineſs, the manner in which he decides upon matters, the attention he pays to what is ſaid to him, and his manner of anſwering, ſhews that he will one day be a very ſuperior man, if his authority become ſo great as not to be reſtrained, except by that of the King, which has never

never yet appeared to be very embarraſſing. He has the department of foreign affairs, although he has never been employed in any embaſſy; but he knows the world by means of geography and hiſtory; the Courts of Europe by relations on which he can depend; and in truth, when a perſon is not profoundly ignorant, and has diſcernment enough to judge of men, and to appreciate their intereſts, even thoſe of the day and moment, he may do without much travelling. What is a miniſter of foreign affairs, who has been in all the Courts of Europe? Thoſe who have been moſt employed, have nothing but old memoirs of ſuch courts as they have formerly been ſent to. *M. de Chauvelin* is a Magiſtrate and Keeper of the Seals, and as he has diſcharged the functions of magiſtracy in a diſtinguiſhed manner, he knows well the laws and rules of the Kingdom: it is in this that he is very uſeful to the Cardinal, who has never had an opportunity of ſtudying them. He gives him information upon theſe objects, and who knows to what a degree he guides him in his proceedings? M. le Chancelier d'Agueſſeau, although virtuous and learned, is rather obſcure, and decides

with difficulty. A man in his ſituation ought to determine quickly, but regularly: generally ſpeaking, great magiſtrates would be good miniſters; they apply to buſineſs, they hear and decide, they ſeize the point of difficulty and that which is to fix their opinion, they underſtand the principles, and know how to apply them: and has a miniſter any thing more to do?

[*Note of the Editor*—The author wrote the two preceding articles as well as all the others in 1736, but his death not happening till 1756, he had time in reading them over again, to make reflections founded upon poſterior events: they are in his manuſcript upon ſeparate ſheets, but it is not known preciſely in what year he committed them to paper,—they are as follows:]

At the end of the year 1736, all the eulogiums which I had written of *M. le Cardinal de Fleury* and of *M. Chauvelin*, the hopes I had conceived of the benefit which might reſult from a good underſtanding between them, were proved to be juſt and well-founded. I wrote, as I do at preſent, for my own amuſe-

amuſement, or at moſt for the uſe of my children after my death, that which I ſaw, believed and thought, without prejudice, and having no intereſt to deceive any body. The Cardinal covered himſelf with honour, by concluding a peace which procured to the King Lorraine, a province full of riches and reſources, and which coſt the nation little or nothing to acquire: our military men had diſtinguiſhed themſelves; we had been every where ſucceſsful, although our Generals had ſometimes committed great faults. The Kingdom was not exhauſted either of money or treaſure; France enjoyed an interior calm and was renowned abroad; but the courtiers played the Keeper of the Seals a trick, or rather the Cardinal, of which he felt the cruel effects for the ſix laſt years of his life. They perſuaded him that the intended ſucceſſor to his place and authority, was tired of waiting; that he had an ardent deſire to poſſeſs what he looked upon to be his inheritance; and was capable of making his ſituation diſagreeable, in order to oblige him to give it up ſooner than he otherwiſe wiſhed to do. The Cardinal, who perhaps a few days before he entered the mi-

niſtry, had no great ambition for his place, was ten years afterwards afraid of loſing it: ſo true it is that men ſoon accuſtom themſelves to ſovereign power. He ſtrove to diſcover if what had been told him was true and I can eaſily believe that ſome affirmative proofs were given him: this was done without much difficulty; but he forgot that he was eighty years of age, that an aſſiſtant became daily more neceſſary to him; and that without ſome ſuch aid, he muſt neceſſarily be the tool of intrigue; that even in the courſe of ordinary affairs he would have nobody to point him out expedients, and whom he would be able to make what is called a right hand man. He thought he revenged himſelf upon a traitor, and he ruined a man who was neceſſary to him: he took extraordinary meaſures which proved his credit with the King, of which nobody had the leaſt doubt. His Majeſty had never had a ſingle converſation in private with *M. de Chauvelin*, his manner was diſpleaſing to him; but the courtiers more artful than the firſt Miniſter, ſaw that as the Cardinal could on one hand obtain every thing of the King, they ſhould afterwards be able to obtain

tain whatever they pleaſed of the Miniſter; even things the moſt contrary to the principles and welfare of the ſtate.

The Emperor Charles VI. had acted in favour of France, with no other idea than that of engaging her to become guarantee of his pragmatic ſanction, or the act which was to inſure the ſucceſſion of his ſtates to his eldeſt daughter. The Cardinal had promiſed him this, and the reputation which the Cardinal had till then enjoyed, of being virtuous and ſincere, made the Emperor eaſy upon the effect of that promiſe; therefore, Charles VI. died in 1740, in the pleaſing perſuaſion that his daughter and his ſon-in-law would inherit his crowns; and that if any power ſhould diſturb them in their poſſeſſions, France would fly to their aſſiſtance. The Queen of Spain was the only diſcontented perſon, becauſe ſhe had no eſtabliſhment in Italy for her ſecond ſon: however unjuſt this pretenſion might be, it would have been poſſible to ſatisfy her, without undertaking to deſtroy the new Houſe of Auſtria. But the man who, like a wiſe and great politician would have been able to make,

make this arrangement was in exile at Bourges. More dangerous and leſs delicate negociators, or rather intriguers, deranged the head of the firſt Miniſter, who was eighty-ſix years of age, and the deſtruction of the Houſe of Auſtria was reſolved upon: he was taught to look upon this as a thing ſo eaſy of execution, that he would have reproached himſelf ſeverely, if he had let ſlip ſo favourable an opportunity of effacing even the remembrance of Charles Vth's pretenſions to univerſal monarchy. The poor Cardinal was ſo convinced of the truth of what was propoſed to him, that his only objection was the great expence France would be put to by the enterprize: he feared, leaſt it ſhould exhauſt her treaſures, and overturn his ſyſtem of œconomy. He was given to underſtand, that France had only to ſhew herſelf, or that at moſt, it could only coſt her a few men and a little money: he ſuffered himſelf to be prevailed upon;—he gave more than he was willing to do, but much leſs than was neceſſary. He died diſgraced in the eyes of all Europe, betrayed by one part of his allies, and deteſted by the other, having neglected to conciliate himſelf

ſelf the friendſhip of thoſe whom he ought by all means to have made ſure of, ſuch as the King of Sardinia, &c. He left France in the greateſt diſtreſs, engaged in a naval war, without his having taken meaſures either to prevent it or carry it on. Solon ſaid to Crœſus, that no man could be called happy before his death; and may not it equally be ſaid, that a Miniſter is never certain of being to the end of his life, a wiſe, virtuous and able politician.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXII.

ON BENEFICENCE.

MY good friend the Abbey de St. Pierre, who has laid ſo many plans for the good of the public, has never had the ſatisfaction of even ſeeing one of them ſucceed. His ſucceſſes are confined to eſtabliſhing the reputation of a ſingle word, which is *beneficence*. But is this word as generally underſtood, as it has been enthuſiaſtically adopted? No: every one interprets and practiſes this virtue according to his own manner. Upon the whole, beneficence implies as much as charity; but this old devout expreſſion, with which our pulpits ring, appears no longer proper for our men of the world, who pretend to have no farther need of thinking of God to do good actions. Let us not diſturb theſe gentlemen in their ſyſtem of beneficence; if they be really deſirous of following it, let them ſatisfy themſelves.

ſelves. I remember to have heard a very ſevere devotee complain to a Jeſuit, a man of great ſenſe, that her daughter in-law, was humane and generous, but had no merit, as ſhe ſaid, in her good actions, becauſe ſhe did not do them in the ſight of God. *Let her alone, Madam,—let her alone,* ſaid the cunning Jeſuit, *ſhe will gain Paradiſe without ſuſpecting it.*

Well, let us be beneficent, ſince we bluſh to be charitable; but let us beware of deceiving ourſelves in the manner of exerciſing our beneficence; let us regulate it according to time, place and circumſtances. There are acts of beneficence adapted to every ſituation: that of kings, reſembles the beneficence of particulars in the principle only; but it is much more extenſive in its effects. The individual does ſervices to men one by one; the monarch, by a ſtroke of his pen, makes thouſands happy. People in place may do good in proportion, each according to his ſtation. In the firſt moments, we ought only to conſider the degree of ſufferings and miſery, or the danger of him whom we wiſh to ſuccour.

But

But except in unforeſeen caſes, it is neceſſary to be more circumſpect. There are ſervices which a man might render, thinking himſelf diſpoſed to do ſo by beneficence, and which might be miſunderſtood; ſuch are thoſe which would do more harm to others, than good to thoſe he wiſhed to oblige. The concluſion is; that it is not ſufficient to deſire to be beneficent, it is equally neceſſary to know how to be ſo.

ESSAY XXIV.

ON SELF-LOVE.

SELF-Love is not generally to be blamed; in the firſt place to condemn it, would be ineffectual, ſince we cannot entirely diveſt ourſelves of it. It is neceſſary that a man ſhould love himſelf, (but, as one of my friends, a man of great ſenſe, ſaid,) in every thing which is good and honourable, as he loves a virtuous woman whom he wiſhes to marry, and not as an unhappy wretch whom he ſtrives to debauch.

ESSAY XXV.

IDEAS OF HAPPINESS VARIOUS AMONGST PHILOSOPHERS.

THE end of philoſophy has ever been to make men happy; but the different ſects of philoſophers have ſought this end by different ways. The Stoics pretended, that the only means of finding it was to reſiſt every evil, to become inſenſible of miſery, pain, chagrin and inquietude. They might be right; in fact, when we are free from all evil, happineſs comes of itſelf; but how great is the difficulty of being thus exempt, eſpecially when we do not think of preventing miſery, but wait its arrival with unconcern and a ſtoic firmneſs. The Epicureans, on the contrary, ſought happineſs and even pleaſures; but perhaps the more pleaſure is ſought after, the leſs it is found. Let us be of neither one ſect or the other, but wiſely put away from ourſelves, that which may become prejudicial; let us pave the way to happineſs and to ſoft and peaceful

ful pleaſures in which it really conſiſts; but do not let us be anxious to call for it, neither fatigue ourſelves by running after riches and voluptuouſneſs; theſe are like birds which only require their neſts to be prepared, and which come of themſelves to depoſe their eggs in them.

To increaſe the happineſs of thoſe who are about us, appears to me an excellent means of prolonging our own.

ESSAY XXVI.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF CHANCES APPLIED TO LIFE.

THE Engliſh are known to be great calculators, great bettors, and to wiſh to reduce every thing to analyſis and probability. We have already tranſlated into French their calculations upon the probabilities of the duration of human life, the analyſis of all the games of chance, and rules for gaining at them, as well as in lotteries, in ſpite of the decrees of fate. One of my friends, who has been ſometime in England, has carried this ſpirit of calculation ſtill farther than even the Engliſh; he makes a problem of every thing to have the pleaſure of reſolving it; he meaſures the extent of his pleaſures, his pains, his friendſhip, and his hatred. With reſpect to love, he agrees that, when it is real, it is commenſurable. Not content

to

to have found out new rules for games of chance, he has undertaken to calculate how much is to be aſcribed to hazard, and how much to the ſkill of the player in games of commerce, eſpecially at * trictrac and piquet. After having amuſed myſelf with his reſearches upon this ſubject, which he believes to be an important one, I aſked him if he could alſo calculate what part fortune had in the life of men who had made moſt noiſe in the world, conſidering on one hand the ſituations they were in, and on the other their perſonal merit. The ſame principles may be applied to them, ſaid he, as to players at piquet. This idea made me ſmile; I amuſed myſelf with it for ſome time as we continued our walk, (for we were in the country); and we brought upon the carpet ſeveral perſons with whom we were both acquainted. On our return to the city, I committed to paper a part of what had been advanced in this ſingular converſation, and which is as follow:

* Something like Backgammon.

The ſum played for, ſignifies nothing to the ſkill of the player, nor to the chances which may derange all his meaſures; it is ſufficient that he be intereſted in the game, ſo as to give it his whole attention. In like manner thoſe to whom nature has given the greateſt talents, employ them in places where they firſt drew breath, conformable to their ſituation and the circumſtances they have to encounter. All the ability of a village parſon, who plays ever ſo well at piquet, gains him nothing more than a few crowns at the end of the year, even with the aſſiſtance of aces; whilſt he who plays againſt rich financers with the ſame ſuperiority, ſometimes encreaſes his income ſome thouſand guineas. The ſimple monk, born with a great diſpoſition to intrigue, diſcards his rival, parries the ſtrokes of his adverſaries, does nothing without reflection, and at length ſucceeds; and to what? to become ſuperior, and govern a community, or at moſt a province of monks. It is by the ſame means that a courtier becomes a favourite, a prime miniſter, and governs deſpotically a great empire. The republican who

who wiſhes to riſe above equality, and become maſter of his countrymen, follows the ſame route. Wherever ambition, intereſt, or gallantry is concerned, it is only neceſſary to be prudent, like as at play, not to ſuffer the head to turn, and to make a proper uſe of all the advantages which fortune preſents to us. But as it is remarked, that there are players at piquet, whoſe chief excellence is to diſcard well, others whoſe ſuperiority conſiſts in playing the cards, and ſome who are wholly attached to betting, knowing the gain this produces at the end of the *partie*; ſo there are men of ambition whoſe only care is to remove all obſtacles to obtain their end; others, wherever they may be placed, ſtrive to take advantage of their ſituation, and finally, ſome who wiſh to conſolidate their fortunes, and inſure their reputations, perſuaded that they have done nothing well if they do not crown their actions by ſomething brilliant.

After all, many games are won contrary to every rule, and others loſt, notwithſtanding all the art of the moſt ſkilful players;

in the ſame manner there are events which diſconcert the greateſt connoiſſeurs; but theſe are real phenomenons, and notwithſtanding ſuch extraordinary inſtances, it is neceſſary to follow thoſe principles of conduct which are generally received and approved of.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXVII.

CARDINAL ALBERONI'S ORIGIN AND CHARACTER.

THE Cardinal *Alberoni*, is one of thoſe phenomenons of which I have juſt ſpoken, and may be compared to the great player, M. Wall, whom we know at preſent in Paris, and who has made his fortune, as it is reported, with an orange which was given to him; he played it againſt a crown, hazarded the crown againſt others, and gained inſenſibly a conſiderable ſum. By hazarding fortunately he has realiſed ſeveral millions of livres. *Alberoni* ſtaked leſs and gained more; at leaſt in dignities and reputation. He was the ſon of a gardener, and at firſt a ringer in the cathedral of Plaiſance. The biſhop took a liking to him, and finding him active and intelligent, made him his ſecretary, and gave him a canonry. He had occaſion to know the duke of Vendôme in Parma, and he pleaſed him by meanneſſes

neſſes of which an Italian prieſt alone is capable; the duke attached him to his ſervice, brought him to France, and took him afterwards into Spain. Vendôme wanting a faithful and diſcreet agent near the Princeſs des Urſins, ſent her *Alberoni*. This Italian, as pliant in appearance as audacious in reality, perſuaded the princeſs, who governed Philip V. in the moſt abſolute manner, during the time that this monarch was a widower, that ſhe ought to make him marry the Princeſs of Parma. This marriage was accompliſhed, and the diſgrace of the Princeſs des Urſins was the conſequence. *Alberoni* took upon himſelf to lead the new queen. She procured him the cardinal's hat; he became her firſt miniſter, and conſequently that of the king her huſband. He diſplayed immediately the whole extent of his views, both in Spain and elſewhere; he re-eſtabliſhed the king's authority in the Government, and made uſe of it to correct many abuſes, and to begin ſeveral important eſtabliſhments which deſerved to be encouraged. The population and commerce of Spain were intereſted in them. He made a military reformation, and put the army upon

upon a more uſeful and regular footing. He had never been more than ſecretary to a general, but had ſeen enough of armies, to judge of what was neceſſary to eſtabliſh in them order and diſcipline; this is what a miniſter ought to attend to. His duty is to ſee that troops are well regulated, and in a good ſtate, before the general who is to command is charged with them. *Alberoni* employed himſelf ſucceſsfully alſo in the adminiſtration and regulation of finances. This interior arrangement was neceſſary to prepare for the execution of the great views which he had abroad. Theſe were no leſs than to make Spain the arbitreſs of Europe, to inſure her Italy, and to give employment enough to the Emperor, to England and Holland, (which were then called maritime powers) to prevent them from oppoſing his deſigns. For this purpoſe, he formed alliances in the north, and even one with the Turks. It unfortunately happened, that particular circumſtances made France an enemy to the Duke of Orleans who was regent. He carried on with ability, audacious intrigues to inſure Philip V. the crown of France in caſe that the young

young King Lewis XV. ſhould die. But with whatever prudence ſo many great enterprizes were formed and carried on, ſome of them croſſed each other in ſuch a manner, as to make it impoſſible that they ſhould all ſucceed. Peace was made between France and Spain, and *Alberoni* fell a victim to it. He ſupported the diſgrace and perſecution, which were its firſt conſequences, like a great man: in fact he was one. He ſaw that he was a victim from circumſtances, and not on account of any fault he had committed. His deſire had been like that of Richelieu, to ſerve his maſter; but time, place, and even his maſter were very different.

Alberoni, at length enjoying tranquillity in Rome, obtained the legation of Romagna, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf again by undertaking a conqueſt for the Pope as Temporal Sovereign; this was the little Republic of St. Marino, a village ſituated near Rimini, upon an eminence. The enterprize had all the appearance of a parody of the heroic comedies which *Alberoni* had performed in Spain, twenty years before. At leaſt this

compariſon ought to be applied to him, drawn from piquet players,—that a ruined gameſter, although able, conducts himſelf in the ſame manner when playing at ſixpence a fiſh, as he formerly did when playing for guineas a point.

Since it is agreed, that all the books we have printed under the title of *Teſtamens politiques*, are nothing but hiſtorical romances, there could not be a better, than the political Teſtament of *Alberoni.**

* Note of the Editor. It has been ſince publiſhed and is tolerably well written.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXVIII.

CHARACTER OF THE PRINCE OF CONDÉ.

THE great *Condé* was born with ſo ſtrong a military genius, that, by a ſort of natural impulſe, I will ſay almoſt inſtinct, he choſe the beſt poſts, ranged his troops in the moſt advantageous manner, ſupported the different bodies of his army by each other, made them attack with vigour, fought courageouſly at their head, never loſt his compoſure even in the heat of battle, ſaw every thing which happened, and took advantage of every incident in ſuch a manner as not to let the leaſt favourable one eſcape him. This hero in war was but a very middling politician at court. He knew not how to act opportunely. The honour he had acquired gave him at firſt ſome weight; but his capacity being tried in councils and intrigues, he was found inferior to his reputation. He was incapable of application and reflection; he committed imprudences, had ſeveral weakneſſes,

and

and was even frequently guilty of injuſtice. War had hardened his heart, and he began rather late to cultivate his mind. If the advantages of birth had not given him the command of armies, whilſt he was yet in the flower of his age; if the time in which he lived had not been full of troubles and continual wars, but pacific like our own, his military talents would have been loſt, and *M. le Prince de Condé*, would never have borne the ſurname of Great.

Condé, being made a tool of by the Cardinal Mazarine and the Spaniards, into whoſe ſtates he had been obliged to retire, returned to France after the peace of the Pyrenees: he found himſelf as great a warriour as ever, and it appeared that he had loſt none of his military merit. He beat at Senef, the ſame enemies of France, at the head of which he had fought Turenne, at the battle of Dunes; this proves more ſtrongly, that he was born with thoſe talents which make great generals, and not with ſuch as would be uſeful to kings in their councils, and are neceſſary to miniſters.

ESSAY XXIX.

CHARACTER OF MARSHAL TURENNE.

M. De Turenne, of a leſs illuſtrious birth, and whoſe reputation in war was not ſo brilliant as that of the Prince of *Condé*, had, perhaps upon the whole, as much military merit. He placed it in the moſt advantageous point of view, becauſe his talents were diſtinguiſhed and procured him employment. He had, perhaps, others which his extreme modeſty and reſerved character hindered him from making known; he was thought capable of being at the head of a party becauſe he refuſed it. But if his military ſuperiority was balanced by that of *M. de Condé*, the qualities of his mind were always looked upon to be ſuperior to thoſe of his rival. He was as compoſed in the cabinet as in the field, and this hero in war was a mild and amiable individual in ſociety. He did not become a Catholic till

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it was too late to ſuſpect his change of religion, to proceed from motives of ambition or intereſt. His death was equally regretted by the ſoldiers and people; an eulogium which no General had merited ſince the glorious ages of the Roman Republic and Empire.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXX.

CHARACTER AND MILITARY SERVICES OF THE DUKE OF VENDOME.

THE *Duke of Vendome* was born, like the Great Condé, inſpired with the ſcience of war: he had the ſame courage, the ſame coolneſs in the midſt of the greateſt dangers; the ſame juſt and rapid *coup-d'œil*; but theſe advantages were counterbalanced by great defects. I have never ſeen him perſonally, but I have had occaſion to ſpeak of him to ſo many military men who had ſerved under his command, that I am not deceived in what I have juſt ſaid of him.

After having ſerved as a volunteer under the Great Condé, as Colonel and a General officer under Marſhal Luxembourg, the command of the army was given to him at the beginning of the war for the Spaniſh ſucceſſion. He was ſent into Italy in 1702, and during three or four of the firſt campaigns, he ſupported the honour of the King's

King's arms, and gained four battles, two of them before the defection of the Duke of Savoy, and two afterwards; yet he had to do with the famous Prince Eugene, who underſtood the art of war better than any man of the age in which he lived; provided in the beſt manner for every thing which could happen, knew better than any body how to ſubſiſt an army; and conducted it with wiſdom, coolneſs, and reflection, into ſuch ſituations as were capable of rendering it the moſt uſeful. *M. de Vendome* was not ſo profound in his deſigns, made fewer reflections and combinations in preparing for his operations: he was too neglectful of detail; but in critical and deciſive moments, he awoke, as it were from a trance; ſeemed to recall his whole genius; took meaſures equally wiſe and vigorous; and ſhewed more heroiſm and judgment than even the Prince Eugene would perhaps have done in a ſimilar ſituation. The French ſoldiers, whom he did not ſubject to too ſevere a diſcipline, had ſo much confidence in his meaſures, that they would have riſked every thing to have withdrawn him from any diſagreeable ſituation into which he might have fallen. They fear-

ed nothing when they ſaw him at their head; and were perſuaded that to go into battle under his command was to be led on to glory. It is generally believed, that a perfidious policy recalled him from Piedmont, and ſent him into Flanders; and that when there he had not time enough to repair the faults which the Marſhall Villeroy had committed. He was afterwards ſent into Spain, without any body to ſecond him, without an army or any kind of ſuccour; but his name and reputation, added to the former confidence of the French who had ſerved under him ſome years before, made up every deficiency: he reconducted Philip V. almoſt driven from his poſſeſſions, to Madrid; purſued the enemies, forced them to evacuate Spain, and retire into Portugal. This was the fruit of the famous battle of Villa Vicioſa, in 1710. Covered with glory, (which ſeemed to ſeek him rather than he to run after it) with honours, which he thought himſelf, as he really was, ſuperior to, and with riches which he neglected and deſpiſed, he died at Vinaros in Catalonia, of an indigeſtion, a kind of death which appears little worthy of one of the greateſt and moſt able

able Generals of the age, but which anſwered otherwiſe well enough to his private life; for it muſt be agreed that this made a great contraſt with his military one. His character was mild and beneficent; he was a ſtranger to envy, hatred and revenge; he prided himſelf in thus reſembling Henry IV. he was neither haughty, vain nor oſtentatious; and fully perſuaded that nobody could have a deſire to be wanting in reſpect to him: effectively, he never had reaſon to think to the contrary. The princes of the blood only could diſpute with him in France the ſuperiority of rank, and he never had the leaſt difference about it but with them; and even theſe, were always terminated in the moſt honourable and becoming manner.

Such was the *Duke of Vendome*, conſidered in the moſt favourable light. Let us at preſent examine what he was, according to other Memoirs, perhaps as faithful, in a leſs advantageous point of view. He was of a middling ſize, and had a vigorous conſtitution; his figure and air were noble, his look and converſation graceful: he had great na-

tural ſenſe, which was but little cultivated; he was even profoundly ignorant in the art of war, which he had never ſtudied or reflected upon; brave even to intrepidity, daring when he could get the better of his indolence; he was generally ſucceſsful by what may be called an effect of his happy ſtar; he knew as much of the world and the court as he did of war, and in the ſame manner, by routine, and without any regular principles; notwithſtanding this, he pleaſed every body, though he was no courtier, except to the King alone; and he made all the reſt perceive that he was the ſon of Henry IV. and that he ought not to cede, except to the legitimate deſcendants of that monarch. This kind of vanity pleaſed Lewis XIV. who having, like his grandfather, natural children, wiſhed to make them equal to the princes of the blood. The *Duke of Vendome* was not exceſſively polite, and was reſerved with thoſe whom he thought capable of oppoſing him; but he affected to be familiar and popular with the loweſt rank of officers, with the ſoldiers, and thoſe of his ſervants, whom he believed incapable of abuſing his goodneſs. Obſtinate and inacceſſible

ceſſible to the counſels and repreſentations of thoſe who would have been attended to by any other man; he ſuffered himſelf to be governed by ſuch only as were extravagant in their praiſes of him, and in their admiration and reſpect for his perſon and qualities. As ſoon as it was perceived in the army that this was the means to obtain his confidence, there were found in the moſt diſtinguiſhed military rank, men baſe enough to flatter his weakneſſes, in hopes that he would put them in a ſituation to make their fortunes. He carried, particularly in the decline of life, libertiniſm, ſlovenlineſs and indolence to ſo great an exceſs, that it is inconceivable theſe defects were not more prejudicial to him. In the midſt of the court of Lewis XIV. ſometimes gallant, ſometimes a devotee, he made no ſecret of his moſt indecent and culpable pleaſures; and Lewis XIV. dared not reproach him upon a kind of debauch, which, during the whole time of his reign, would have ruined any other ſubject. Every thing, which the courts of Verſailles would have bluſhed at, was openly braved in the little court of Anet. Thoſe who ſerved under him in his Italian

campaign have aſſured me, that he had by mere indolence miſſed more than twenty times the fineſt opportunities of beating the enemy; and that he had by negligence as frequently expoſed his army to be deſtroyed: but happily thoſe who commanded the wings and in the rear, were more attentive and vigilant.

Every body has heard talk of the cool of the morning of *M. de Vendome*, an expreſſion which is ſtill made uſe of to deſcribe a march made in the heat of the day: this comes from the cuſtom *M. de Vendome* had, of announcing in the evening, that he would march very early the next morning; but when the moment indicated for departure arrived, he lay ſo long in bed, that it was generally noon before he was in motion; the warmeſt climates and ſeaſons made no difference in this reſpect.

The greateſt advantage he had over Prince Eugene, was in defeating his calculations, by making none himſelf. As he never took his departure from any place at the time he had previouſly fixed upon, no ſpy could

could give intelligence of his motions. He held no councils with his general officers, ſo that no body ever knew what he meaned to do; he began a campaign without any ſettled plan, and gave himſelf but little trouble about thoſe ſent him by the court; therefore his deſigns might well be ſaid to be impenetrable. His audacity and penetration in great operations repaired all his faults. It was only in the campaign he made in Flanders in 1708, where he had under his command, the Duke of Burgundy, preſumptive heir to the crown, that his obſtinacy in not taking every poſſible advantage, made him loſe a battle, and all the fruit of a campaign which might have been happily terminated. The French army was encamped near Oudenarde; it was eaſy to take poſſeſſion of that place, which was badly fortified, and to cut off all ſupplies from the enemy; but to effect this, it was neceſſary to anticipate them, before they could perceive it was poſſible to diſtreſs them. *M. de Vendome*, was frequently adverti ſed of this, but as it did not come from thoſe, who by their meanneſs had gained his

confidence, he took no notice of what was ſaid to him upon the ſubject.

Marlborough, who commanded the enemies army, ſoon ſaw that *M. de Vendome* had only his motion to make, and that it was neceſſary to oppoſe him. But he could not approach Oudenarde, without making a conſiderable circuit, and he might arrive there too late for his purpoſe: the Duke of Burgundy went himſelf to prevail upon *M. de Vendome* to act without delay; he could not make him ſhake off his indolence, nor perſuade him to quit the place he was in. Finally, M. de Biron, Lieutenant General, who commanded a *corps de reſerve*, ſent word, that the enemy approached and went himſelf to confirm this advice. *M. de Vendome* refuſed obſtinately for ſome time to believe it: at length M. de Biron ran to to his corps, and put himſelf in the beſt poſſible poſture of defence. The general had permitted him to do this upon condition only, that the enemy was near charging. The order was imprudent enough, but Biron was obliged to execute it; for the engagement began immediately between his advanced

advanced poſts and the enemy, which came to reconnoitre them. Marlborough reinforced thoſe who had begun the attack, and Biron did the ſame to his advanced poſts. It became neceſſary for *M. de Vendome* to march, and it was in this manner that the battle of Oudenarde began. Notwithſtanding the valour of the French troops, the efforts of the king's guards, and the perſonal bravery of the duke of Burgundy, the ground not being favourable, becauſe it had not been choſen, neither were the manœuvres prepared, the ſucceſs was not advantageous to us. Some troops were neceſſarily ſacrificed to favour the retreat of the army, which was made to Ghent. The duke of Burgundy did not remain in that city, but retired with the head of the army, behind the canal of Bruges. *M. de Vendome* on the contrary, ſtopped at Ghent to repoſe himſelf after the fatigues of a day, whereon he had given greater proofs of bravery, than of judgment. As ſoon as the duke of Burgundy was fixed in his general quarters, he wrote to the king, informing his Majeſty of what had paſſed; but he was delicate in what he ſaid about the duke of *Vendome*, know-

knowing that the king loved him; *M. de Vendome* wrote alſo, and aſſured the king that he had gained the battle, and that if his ſucceſs had not been complete, it was not his fault. Lewis XIV. was pleaſed to believe him, although France and all Europe were informed to the contrary. *M. de Vendome*, did not loſe the favour of his maſter which he ought to have done; on the contrary, the king believed that the duke of Burgundy would never make a good officer, and that it was uſeleſs to continue to ſend him to the army. If he judged by what paſſed before, and at the battle of Oudenarde, this great monarch was deceived. The ſiege of Lillo, which the enemies undertook the following year, proved clearly what was the conſequence of the loſs of that battle: nevertheleſs, *M. de Vendome* was ſent the next year to ſave Spain; and whoſe preſence alone procured an army, which regained Philip V. his capital, beat the enemy at Villa Vicioſa, and gave the young king the moſt magnificent bed which was ever prepared for a ſovereign, being compoſed of the enſigns of his enemies; but it was only neceſſary to excite the enthuſiaſm

thuſiaſm of the Spaniards and of the French who were in Spain. The name of *Vendome* had this effect. His reputation, juſtly or unjuſtly merited, frightened Staremberg and Stanhope, and his daring character and determined bravery did the reſt. Yet his end, which is ſo brilliant in hiſtory, was melancholy and unhappy. After having paſſed the year 1711, in triumphing over the enemies of Philip V. he had no ſooner received at Madrid all the honours which this king could confer upon his liberator,—the title of Highneſs,—the pre-eminence over all the Grandees of Spain,—in ſhort, all the diſtinctions formerly enjoyed by the famous Don Juan of Auſtria, than he grew tired of this Spaniſh greatneſs; and leaving the court of Madrid, and the conduct of the army to his Lieutenant Generals, he retired to a burgh of Catalonia, called Vinaros; ſurrounded there by a ſmall circle of flatterers and *debauchees*, he gave himſelf up to that kind of voluptuouſneſs which was ſo agreeable to him. He glutted himſelf with fiſh, which he was extravagantly fond of; whether it were good or bad, well or ill dreſſed, it was the ſame thing to him; he

he drank thick bodied and heady wine; and at length brought on a kind of indigeſtion, or rather an illneſs, the conſequence of repeated indigeſtions, which might undoubtedly have been cured by diet and exerciſe. His diſorder was treated in quite a contrary manner; and he had very ſoon no hopes left of being reſtored. The moſt honeſt of his Courtiers then abandoned him; others took his furniture and equipage; and it is aſſerted, that ſeeing a few moments before he expired, ſome of his under Valets ready to take away and divide his bed cloaths, he aſked them as a favour to permit him to draw his laſt breath in his bed.—He was only fifty-eight years of age when he died. The Princeſs des Urſins, who had at that time the greateſt influence with the king of Spain, got orders for his body to be laid in the Royal Tomb of the Eſcurial. The moſt elegant funeral orations were delivered in honour of him, both in France and Spain. Theſe have ſerved to deceive poſterity with reſpect to his real character; and no hiſtorian whom I have heard of, has yet given himſelf the trouble to undeceive it.

I have heard ſeveral anecdotes, related by perſons who lived with *M. de Vendome*, of his cynical ſlovenlineſs, and which are of ſo ſingular a nature, that I would mention them if they were not more diſguſting than ridiculous. It was by applauding his filthineſs, that the Cardinal *Alberoni* made his fortune: ſo true it is that men ſucceed in this by every kind of means, and the Italian prieſts and monks are not ſcrupulous about any.

The duke of *Vendome* had a younger brother, who poſſeſſed all his good qualities and his defects, but in a leſs proportion. On this account he has acquired leſs honour, and his memory will be leſs revered by poſterity. But M. le grand Prior of *Vendome*, was ſufferable in the world and in private ſociety; he was even looked upon, towards the end of his life, as an amiable voluptuary; and he died at the age of ſeventy-two years, beloved and regretted by men of ſenſe, who were fond of his company, and pleaſed with the friendly reception they uſually met with from him in his houſe. I have frequently ſeen him at the

the temple; ſome of my friends were intimately acquainted with him, and I know others of his aſſociates who are of the moſt reſpectable characters: on the contrary, if the duke of *Vendome* had lived to a greater age, and had peace been made, his talents, or rather his good fortune in war, would have become uſeleſs to the ſtate; his debauched and diſguſting manner of living, would at length have rendered him contemptible in the eyes of every honeſt man; and as great as he was by birth and military renown, no body would have aſſociated with him.

The grand Prior ſerved in Candia againſt the Turks, with his uncle the duke of Beaufort, ſo much known at the time of the Fronde, and who terminated by that expedition his tempeſtuous life. It was a fine aprenticeſhip for a knight of Malta. This campaign ſaved him one caravan: he was ſtill young when he made it, but ſeventeen years of age; and ſoon after his return to France, he followed Lewis XIV. to the conqueſt of Holland; and diſtinguiſhed himſelf at the paſſage of the Rhine, and in the campaigns

campaigns of the two following wars, one of which was terminated by the peace of Nimeguen, and the other by that of Ryſwick. He was wounded at the battle of Marſeilles, and made Lieutenant General in 1693. He ſerved with his brother, and ſometimes under him, but never after the year 1705. He ſhewed the ſame bravery as his elder brother,—the ſame military talents; perhaps they were greater, becauſe he was leſs opinionated and indolent. He was not commander in chief, conſequently the ſucceſſes of his brother did not contribute to his reputation: but who knows what part he had in theſe, and that if his advice had been followed, the duke of *Vendome* would not have gained more honour? The libertiniſm of the grand Prior, was not leſs exceſſive than that of the duke, although it was in certain reſpects, more decent. His pleaſures kept him from his duty, and from being at the battle of Caſſano in 1705. He was diſgraced on account of his neglect; after which he retired to Rome, and ſpent ſome years in travelling in Italy. The king was determined to deprive him of his benefices, but he reſigned them to ſave appearances,

pearances, and a penſion was granted him. Having unhappily been made priſoner by the Imperialiſts, in croſſing the country of the Griſons, he could not return to France before 1712, the ſame year in which his brother died in Spain. It is poſſible that the fault he had committed ſix or ſeven years before, might have ſpared him a great deal of mortification and embarraſſment; at leaſt he was not a witneſs to the campaign of 1708, wherein his brother behaved ſo ill, nor to his miſerable death at Vinaros. He ſurvived him fifteen years, and was the laſt of the houſe of *Vendome*; but he had received the order of Malta. His brother married a Princeſs of Condé; but not being dazzled with the honour of this alliance, he took no means to give nephews to the great Condé, nor to perpetuate the illegitimate race of Henry IV. The grand Prior, for his part, thought of nothing but enjoying, like a true epicurean, the encreaſe of his fortune. Nevertheleſs he made in 1715, once more, a truce with his pleaſures, to fly to ſuccour Malta, which was threatened with an invaſion by the Turks; he was declared Generaliſſimo of the forces of his order.

order. This is the only time he had such a title, and that he was commander in chief. Malta was not besieged, and the grand Prior returned to his delicious retreat of the temple, when he died in 1717. He had, like his brother, good natural sense, and few advantages of education; but he made a better use of his wit than the duke did, and sometimes challenged in verse, the Abby de Chaulieu and the Marquis de la Fare. I never knew the latter, who died in 1712; but I have sometimes conversed with the Abbé de Chaulieu, who died in the year 1720, eighty-seven years of age. I saw him at the court of the Duchess of Maine, where he was in love with Mademoiselle Launay, her femme de chambre, at present her companion, under the name of Baroness of Staal, she died in 1750. The Abby de Chaulieu was deeply smitten with her, although blind; and certainly Madame de Staal was very well calculated to inspire such a passion, for she was neither handsome nor desirable, but was well recompensed by her wit and understanding. Voltaire, whom we formerly called Arouet, was of the grand Prior of Vendôme's society;

and from that time, I always heard him call this prince his ſong-making highneſs, with the ſame tone of eaſe he always aſſumed with men of rank.

The grand Prior was for a long time in love with Mademoiſelle Rochois, a famous actreſs at the Opera; and this paſſion did him honour, compared with that kind of debauch adopted by his brother. He appeared decent alſo, if oppoſed to the duke; yet there was a good deal of negligence in his dreſs, eſpecially in the decline of his life. He took a great deal of Spaniſh ſnuff, and had the beſt it was poſſible to procure: his only ſnuff box was a pocket lined with leather, deſtined to that uſe, into which he put his hand, and beſmeared his noſe with the ſnuff he took out. A great quantity fell upon his cloaths, with which they were always diſguſtingly covered; it is ſaid, that his valets de chambre made great profits by ſcraping off this ſnuff, putting it into leaden boxes, and ſelling it as newly arrived from Spain.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXXI.

MEMOIR OF THE MARQUIS BELLE-ISLE.

WE have at preſent in France, a man advancing rapidly towards a moſt brilliant fortune, who, on beginning the world had every thing againſt him, but whoſe happy ſtars have ſurmounted all obſtacles. The oſtentatious device, which his grandfather, M. Fouquet took, may be applied to him; a ſquirrel climbing a globe with theſe latin words: *Quo non aſcendet?* Whither will he not climb? The ſuperintendant ſoon ſaw his pretenſions vaniſh: the ſucceſs of this man appears to be more certain; no body can be more attentive and induſtrious than he is in every thing he undertakes. His conduct will be better appreciated, or rather the favours of his protecting Deity, when it is known from whence he is originated. His father was ſecond ſon to the Superintendant, and born after the diſgrace of this miniſter. The hatred with which Colbert had inſpired

Lewis XIV. againſt the name of Fouquet, prevented the Marquis of *Belle-Iſle* from becoming any thing. Yet he found means to marry a woman of faſhion, who, in truth, was without fortune: ſhe was of the houſe of Levis, ſiſter to the duke of that name. Her family was diſpleaſed with her on account of her marriage, and was a long time without ſeeing her; the new married couple went to live with the biſhop of Agde, younger brother to the Superintendant in diſgrace. This prelate was a great reſource to his family.

It was in this kind of retreat that the preſent Marquis of *Belle-Iſle*, his brother, called the Chevalier, and ſeveral ſiſters were born. At the death of the biſhop of Agde, it was neceſſary for *Monſieur* and *Madame de Belle-Iſle* to return to Paris, to the good Madame Fouquet, widow of the Superintendant, whoſe charity was ſo univerſal, that ſhe was looked on as a ſaint. She died and left *Monſieur* and *Madame de Belle-Iſle* in very narrow circumſtances. The Iſland of *Belle-Iſle*, from whence the marquis took his name was very poor land, produced but a ſmall

a ſmall revenue, and even that may be ſaid to be ſequeſtrated in the hands of the king, who had a garriſon there. However the preſent marquis has found means to reap great advantages from his poſſeſſion, or rather from his pretenſions to that iſland. He was at firſt deſtined to the profeſſion of arms, but certainly he could not begin that career with the ſame advantages as men of quality do: however he found reſources in the name of his mother, and in the credit of his maternal relations. He obtained a regiment of dragoons, ſerved in the army of Flanders, and was in Liſle when it was beſieged by the enemies, and defended by the Marſhal de Boufflers. He attached himſelf to this general, and was fortunate enough to pleaſe him. He ſoon became neceſſary to him, and having been wounded, the marſhal obtained him for the rank of brigadier, in preference to others who applied for it, among whom was the Marquis of Maillebois, ſon to M. de Deſmarets, comptroller general of the finances, and nephew to Colbert. This was the firſt victory which the family of Fouquet obtained over that of Colbert, after the diſgrace of the Superintendant.

At length, being continually protected by the Marſhal de Boufflers, he was promoted even before the death of Lewis XIV. to the place of *Meſtre de Camp*, general of dragoons, which was the object of ambition in ſome of the firſt men of the court. After the death of the king, *M. de Belle-Iſle*, conducted himſelf, during the whole courſe of the regency, with inconceivable propriety and addreſs, never loſing ſight, for an inſtant, of the object of his ambition and fortune. He was well with every body in the time of trouble and faction, and made himſelf uſeful to all parties. I have ſeen him make his court to my father, and gain his good graces. He was not deceived by the ſyſtem of Mr. Law; nor did he embark in it like many others who hoped, at firſt, to draw therefrom immenſe riches, but who were in the end ruined. After the overthrow of this adventurer and his ſyſtem, *M. de Belle-Iſle*, reaped the fruit of his prudence.

During the little Spaniſh war of 1719, he ſhewed great zeal for the regent, againſt a king who was grandſon to Lewis XIV. and

and his zeal made him Marechal de Camp, and Governor of Hunninguen. He contributed to determine the regent to give the title of firſt miniſter to the Cardinal Dubois; but death deprived him of this perſonage, who was otherwiſe incapable of the leaſt gratitude for his good ſervices. M. le Blanc was ſecretary at war, without ſupport or counſel; *M. de Belle-Iſle* made himſelf maſter of his mind and his department; the death of the Duke of Orleans, at length checked his career. The Duke of Bourbon, took upon himſelf the premierſhip, without *M. de Belle-Iſle's* being able to ſeize the moment and means to prevent him. M. le Blanc was arreſted; government was determined to proſecute him; *M. de Belle-Iſle* was himſelf confined to the Baſtille. He was exiled the year following, and perſecuted during the whole adminiſtration of the duke, by perſons whoſe beſt friend he is at preſent. At length the duke was diſplaced, and the enemies of *M. de Belle-Iſle* impriſoned and exiled in their turn. The Cardinal Fleury came into place; he had been the intimate friend of the Ducheſs of Levis, aunt to *M. de Belle-*

Iſle, who made uſe of this old connexion to gain the confidence of the new firſt miniſter. He ſucceeded in his attempt: M. le Blanc was reſtored to his place, and *M. de Belle-Iſle* continued to enjoy the greateſt credit until the death of the Secretary of ſtate. He ſaw that it was impoſſible to have the ſame influence under his ſucceſſor, and that on this account, the beſt thing he could do would be to ſerve in the war. He was made Lieutenant General, and commander of Metz and the Evêchés, or biſhopricks: he made a great diſplay of the advantageous arrangements undertaken for the ſtate in his new command. At the beginning of the war, he poſſeſſed himſelf of Treves, which is an open city. He ſpoke in great terms on the utility of this conqueſt: that of Philipſburgh was not due to him, although he ſerved well at the ſiege. He was created *Chevalier des ordres du Roi* in 1735, and from that moment the cardinal took his advice upon the concluſion of the peace. This old man thought perhaps, that he was obliged to him for having acquired Lorrain, becauſe *M. de Belle-Iſle* inſiſted upon the importance of this acquiſition propoſed

poſed by others. May it pleaſe heaven, that after having applauded a good reſolution, he may not hereafter make him take a worſe! However this may be, there is every appearance that the fortune of *M. de Belle-Iſle* will not remain in its preſent ſituation. Although he has ſcarcely done any thing but intrigue, he is thought very capable of being a great general and a great miniſter: it will be neceſſary to examine this matter.

He is tall and thin; his conſtitution has always appeared to be delicate, his ſtomach weak, his heart affected, ſince the wound he received at the ſiege of Liſle. He appears obliged to be exceeding careful of his health, which he really is, to as great a degree as is poſſible; but as ſoon as he feels himſelf animated by the deſire of acquiring glory, and of inſuring ſucceſs to a plan of ambition or intrigue, the activity of his mind gives him that ſtrength which the weakneſs of his body refuſes: he is continually at buſineſs, ſleeps but little, and tires the moſt indefatigable of his ſecretaries, dictating to ſeveral at a time. In a word, he is like fire, he devours every thing and

reſiſts

reſiſts every thing; he carries on ſeveral intrigues at the ſame time, never loſes ſight of one of his threads, and takes care that they do not croſs each other. In an age where ſtrict probity, real merit, and wiſe and ſolid views are not the beſt recommendations, a man who knows how to uſe at once docility and aſſurance, cannot fail of ſucceeding. A proof that his ideas are neither enlightened nor really great is, that his ſtile is weak and unanimated, that he neither writes correctly nor forcibly, and has no eloquence even in ſpeaking; but he always appears to be certain of ſucceſs, he never heſitates in giving aſſurances of it; and he perſuades the more on account of its being believed that he uſes no art in doing it. He makes that which he has done, appear to greater advantage than that which he means to do; thoſe who follow his advice, if they receive benefit from it, think themſelves obliged to him; if the contrary be the caſe, they blame themſelves only. If *M. de Belle-Iſle* ſhould be charged with a great adminiſtration, it may be feared, that his exceſſive love of detail, and of every kind of project, will induce him to adopt many plans which he will not be able to execute fully; and that he will never have time

time enough to make a reform. He will certainly be fond of adventurers, being a little ſo himſelf; and will never diſtinguiſh thoſe who might be really uſeful to him.

M. de Belle-Iſle married in 1729, a lady of the houſe of Bethune, well made, beautiful enough, and ſuch a one as is neceſſary for a man like him; ſhe was ſometimes a coquette, with a great deal of art, addreſs, and decency; at others a devotee, always cajoling without meanneſs, and ſenſible without pretenſion: her huſband who knows equally her virtues and defects, ſhews a great attachment to her; and effectively, having no other paſſion than ambition, he has no other miſtreſs than his wife who ſeconds his views. The coquetry of the wife, and the ambition of the huſband equally ſucceed, becauſe they flow from their natural ſource, and coſt nothing to thoſe who employ them.

The *Chevalier de Belle-Iſle*, brother to the Count, has, according to people who have been a good deal in the company of them both, more ſolid and extenſive views in his

plans than his brother; but he has leſs complaiſance, is leſs docile, and poſſeſſes fewer means of pleaſing: he has perhaps more knowledge of the art of war, of policy and adminiſtration, but he does not know ſo well how to enhance the value of his thoughts and actions. Ambition is common to them both, and the chevalier is modeſt enough to appropriate to himſelf, no more of the honour of great ſucceſſes, than what belongs to a younger brother; but it is ſuppoſed, that being always hid behind his brother, he is of great uſe to him, and that he will ſeverely feel his loſs, if he ſhould die before him. The chevalier writes the memoirs of the count, rectifies his plans, and preſides over his domeſtic affairs; they enjoy in their family affairs, every thing in common. The chevalier having better health than his brother, gives himſelf up more to pleaſure; but he does not on this account loſe ſight for a moment, of their common ambition and political intrigues.

The beſt thing which the two brothers have done, is the exchange of the miſerable

Iſland

Iſland of *Belle-Iſle*, for the *Comté* of Giſors, that of Vernon, and the foreſt of Lyons and Audelis. *M. de Belle-Iſle* has a ſon, born in 1732; if he lives he will be as great a man as his father and grandfather would have been, if M. Fouquet had died in place, with as much power as Cardinal Mazarin had.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXXII.

RESPECTIVE EXCELLENCIES OF GENIUS AND JUDGMENT IN BUSINESS.

VIVACITY of thought is vulgarly called wit. It is but too frequently judged that men of dull, and rather heavy ſenſe, and who have not a brilliant and eaſy flow of words are fools; this is certainly a miſtaken notion. To be a man of wit, is to have juſt ideas, and ſooner or later, to apply them rationally. To be a fool, is to be incapable of judging; the inconſiderate judge precipitately, and are deceived for want of reflection and attention.

Setting out from theſe definitions, the perception of a man of great ſenſe is equally quick and juſt. A man of genius has ſomething more; he riſes above that which is ſubmitted to the ordinary judgement of men; he is full of imagination, has great foreſight, is inventive without exceeding pro-

probability, becauſe he never departs from a certain baſis, which baſis is ſentiment and reaſon. None but fools ſoar imprudently, and at the riſk of every thing. A man of genius ſeizes immediately an idea, and carries it as far as poſſible. A man of good ſenſe takes his reſolution after ſerious reflection; but nothing is worſe than to be inceſſantly undetermined.

In the courſe of ordinary affairs, there is a certain flowneſs of deciſion, the uſe of which is admirable, becauſe it ſeems to put men who are not above mediocrity, upon a level with thoſe of the greateſt abilities. I have ſeen adminiſtrators and miniſters who had this kind of merit only, ſucceed perfectly, and for a conſiderable length of time. But if they had had great and unforeſeen difficulties to encounter, they would not perhaps have acquitted themſelves much to their honour. Theſe men ought, on entering into place, to inſtil into themſelves well approved principles; and after having conſulted perſons capable of furniſhing them with ſuch, to abide by, and firmly to look upon them as their

their compaſs: yet ſome exceptions muſt neceſſarily be made, for there is no general rule without them. A man of an enlightened mind, ſees immediately where they lie; but however great his ſenſe and genius may be, he can never diſpenſe with fundamental principles.

The beſt, in matters of adminiſtration, are thoſe which have been adopted in councils, and made uſe of for a length of time; becauſe they are the fruit of the reflections and experience of a great number of people; and that perſonal intereſts and conſiderations have leſs influence therein, than in thoſe which have been formed by an individual.

But every man, in whatever place he may be, ought to lay down certain rules for his private conduct; with reſpect to theſe, they ſhould be reflected upon in retirement, and perhaps the beſt way is not to conſult any body about them.

It is not only neceſſary to deviate at certain times from the beſt principles, but in the

the end, they muſt be abandoned, or at leaſt modified. Many things become worſe by uſe, but thoſe who manage prudently throw nothing away, without being firſt aſſured, that no farther uſe can be made of it.

It will not be difficult for me to give examples of the different kinds of abilities, I have juſt been ſpeaking of, and of miniſters in whom I have obſerved them; I will do this preſently. In the mean time, let us reaſon a little upon the manner by which men in place ought to act, ſo as to be equal to the numerous objects committed to their care, in a kingdom ſo extenſive as that of France.

When men have occupations of too uniform and monotonous a kind, relaxation is abſolutely neceſſary, if not by real amuſements, at leaſt by varying their employment: magiſtrates apply themſelves at intervals, eſpecially in their vacations, to literature, or to their domeſtic affairs; miniſters who have buſineſs every day in the year, but of different kinds, relax their minds by paſſing from one thing to another.

Detail which would be fatiguing of itſelf, is enlivened by another with which it is connected. It is ſaid, that Cardinal Richelieu applied to buſineſs no more than ſix hours a day; the reſt of his time was taken up by giving audiences which were not all equally ſerious and tireſome; by intrigues, and finally by pleaſures, for the great Cardinal partook of them. I imagine, that independently of Marion de Lorine, and the Abby de Bois Robert, the compoſition of his theatrical pieces, and his rivality with Corneille, were real amuſements to him: how could he have looked upon them otherwiſe?

The learned Abby de Longuerue, with whom I have been a good deal acquainted, amuſed himſelf in the middle of his library, without deviating from his ſearch after knowledge. He has frequently told me, that he took up one book after another, and varied his ſtudies; that it was in this manner, having a ſtrong memory and great facility in reducing to order what he read, he had learned a great deal without fatiguing himſelf. This facility becomes habitual;

al; we perceive that we are inſenſibly become more learned than others. We gain a kind of confidence in our own knowledge, which leads to pronounce upon every thing which preſents itſelf; and when this deciſive manner is not carried to impertinence and pedantry, others accuſtom themſelves to believe you, acknowledge your ſuperiority, and leave you to engroſs the whole converſation. We allow men their erudition, when they are not overbearing; and their extenſive knowledge when they attribute it to memory only, and not to a ſuperiority of underſtanding: but a man of projects, who diſplays them, and ſays publicly, that they are ſuperior to all that have ever been invented, and who will take to himſelf the honour of the greateſt diſcoveries, is commonly looked upon as a quack, who wiſhes to ſell his drugs; but no purchaſers are found; for men would fear being poiſoned if they taſted them.

Minute exactitude and punctuality are virtues of the ſecond order; but it becomes modeſt people to obſerve them. There are even caſes, from which if we deviate, we

ſhould appear to inſult thoſe who are dependent upon us. It ſeems that we are laying ſnares, by requiring them to obſerve rules which we do not ourſelves follow. We bring upon us their hatred, and perhaps make them doubt of our capacity; for people who have no other merit than that of induſtry, think it a very great one. Without having ſo great an opinion of exactitude, let us at leaſt believe that it has its value. Lewis XIV. did not diſdain to be punctual; he never failed a minute in his appointments; and as great as he was, it was perhaps this perſonal exactitude which gave him a right to take notice of the leaſt want of it in people about him, and to reproach them with it.

I have frequently heard it ſaid, that *we ought not to ſuffer others to do that which we can do ourſelves*; for my part, I am of a contrary opinion, and maintain it. *We ought to ſave ourſelves the trouble of doing that which may be done by others*, but although it be not neceſſary to do every thing, nothing ought to be diſdained. To be attentive to every thing which is done in our name, to adopt

adopt certain principles; to give them to thoſe whom we employ; to take care that they never deviate from them, to be ſure of what they do; finally, to know how to gain proper aſſiſtance, this is what diſtinguiſhes the ſtateſman, the man capable of conducting great affairs. To know how to govern ſecondary cauſes, and not to be governed by them, is a ſublime art. How happy ſhould I be, if I could find people who could and would think and write for me, ſay all that I have to ſay, and execute every thing I would do! But as there are exceptions and bounds to every thing, there are certain caſes wherein it is eaſier to do the buſineſs ourſelves than by others: God forbid, that by this I ſhould give the advice of an indolent man; my opinion is founded upon reaſon and experience. It is a good thing to apply habitually to buſineſs; but it is ſtill better to look ſo well into that which is done for us, as to enable us to diſpenſe with a part of our application; but it is neceſſary to have been a great deal employed, to be able to direct the operations of others.

ESSAY XXXIII.

CHARACTERS OF STATESMEN EXEMPLIFIED.

THERE are certainly no miniſters but thoſe of great abilities, who know how to preſcribe to their ſecretaries, what they ought to do. I knew in France an ambaſſador, a man of great merit, who became afterwards miniſter of a great department in his own country. Under the pretence that his writing was bad, he never wrote a ſingle letter with his own hand; he ſigned his name only; but he explained his intentions ſo clearly to his ſecretaries, who were intelligent people, that they reduced them to good and clear language. He reaſoned with them, told them his motives, encouraged them to make objections, and even to diſpute with him, with decency and reſpect. When he had cleared up every thing, and thought he had convinced them, they ſet to work and his diſpatches were admirable.

It

It is certain that political affairs are frequently forwarded more by converſation, than by means of correſpondence. This is the great difference between miniſters and men of letters. Theſe do better in retirement and contemplation becauſe they have to refer to books; but the others ought to live in the great world and converſe with men, becauſe they have men to govern, whilſt literary men have only their ideas and phraſes to arrange. A miniſter of the firſt order, in a great court, ſhould know how to hearken with patience, attention, and mildneſs; to anſwer calmly, and expreſs himſelf gracefully. Secretaries want, on the contrary, nothing but good ſenſe to underſtand, and a good ſtile in their writing. This is what makes it impoſſible that a ſecretary ſhould ſupply the place of an ambaſſador, becauſe he cannot enjoy the ſame advantages at the court in which he reſides; he cannot know ſo well the character of perſons with whom he has buſineſs, without the freedom of mutual converſation.

It is a queſtion difficult to reſolve, to know if a good ſecretary can become a great miniſter. This depends to a certain degree, upon the country and circumſtances; but he would ſucceed with great difficulty in a monarchical ſtate. Miniſters ſhould be acquainted with the court, and enjoy when they go into place, ſome conſideration; they ſhould not be accuſtomed to tremble when in the preſence of courtiers, and they ought to know how to avoid all their ſnares; for theſe gentlemen wiſh for nothing more than to ſhackle miniſters, ſometimes by ſeducing them, at others by alarming their fears. Moreover, a good ſecretary ought to have no ideas of his own, but to know how to turn to a good account thoſe of the miniſter he is under; the miniſter ought, on the contrary, to think for himſelf; for the advantage and intereſt of the ſovereign and the ſtate. A man who arrives at a great employ, without the advantages of birth, and never having filled an important ſtation, muſt neceſſarily be embarraſſed about the countenance he ought to put on; if he be firm, he is accuſed of inſolence, and is ſaid to have forgot himſelf; if he pre-

preſerves the manner of his former ſtate, he is deſpiſed and treated as if he were ſtill in it.

On the other hand, would it be well done to fill up the places of adminiſtration with military men, and thoſe of the firſt rank? Lewis XIV. did not think ſo; but was of opinion, that it was his intereſt that the greatneſs of his miniſters ſhould depend upon his confidence. A much ſtronger reaſon is, that men of the firſt rank, and thoſe in the army, do not often contract when young, the habit of applying to buſineſs; that they are ignorant of all the forms of it, and that moſt departments require a perfect knowledge of theſe. The real buſineſs of a ſecretary of ſtate, being to give a regular form to all the deciſions of the king and his council. Miniſters ought to be brought up to adminiſtration, becauſe they are nothing more in reality, than the adminiſtrators of affairs. The details confided to their care, are lately become immenſe; nothing is done without them, or by any body elſe. It is to be wiſhed that their knowledge were as great as their power; if it be not, they are obliged

obliged to leave every thing to their clerks, who become maſters of affairs, and conſequently of the ſtate. It is by a knowledge of forms, that ſubalterns are arrived at governing their principals, and to make uſe of a vulgar expreſſion, *that journeymen are become maſters.*

I will give my opinion freely upon miniſters, whom I have ſeen for the laſt thirty years at the head of affairs in France, and of ſome others more ancient whom I have not perſonally known, but upon whoſe characters, &c. I have had memoirs ſufficient to enable me to ſpeak decidedly about them.

The Chancellor le Tellier, father of M. de Louvois, died ſome years before I was born, which was in the year 1693; M. Boucherat was elevated to that great dignity, which would have been much above his capacity, if the times had been more difficult: but the power of Lewis XIV. was ſo well eſtabliſhed, the parliaments were ſo ſubmiſſive, the right of remonſtrating had been ſo reſtrained, or rather taken

away from the ſuperior courts, that there was no danger in giving the place to a magiſtrate, almoſt become the oldeſt member of the council; in confiding to him no other cares than thoſe of filling up the offices of magiſtracy, which venality and right of inheritance facilitated the means of doing; of ſealing edicts and declarations, and creating impoſts and new offices, ſuch as miniſters thought proper to expedite. Therefore M. Boucherat held his place very peaceably until the year 1694, when he died at eighty-four years of age. He left daughters only; his ſucceſſor was M. de Pontchartrain, who was afterwards in 1689, comptroller general of the finances, and in 1690, marine ſecretary of ſtate, and of the department of Paris. It was he who, in 1697, perſuaded my father to charge himſelf with the care of the police of the capital. M. de Pontchartrain took the chancellorſhip as a retreat; in fact it might be looked upon as ſuch at this time, when every thing was in ſuch a ſtate of ſubmiſſion. He was very happy to find the king diſpoſed to make M. de Chamillart his ſucceſſor in the comptrollerſhip, and M. de Pontchartrain

Pontchartrain his ſon, in his other departments. Neither one nor the other was worthy of ſucceeding him; but at length they eaſed him of the moſt important cares, and fatiguing details. It was however neceſſary that he ſhould give advice to his ſon, in whom he had not all the ſatisfaction he had hoped for, which determined him to retire in the year 1714, from all public affairs. Lewis XIV. was become old, and ready to ſink into the grave; M. de Pontchartrain was exactly of the ſame age. Moreover, he wiſhed prudently to avoid being obliged to carry into parliament, an edict which declared the legitimate princes capable of ſucceeding to the crown. M. Voiſin was charged with this commiſſion, which was executed with all the ſubmiſſion generally ſhewn to the orders of Lewis XIV. even to the death of this monarch, which happened in the month of September, 1715. —M. Voiſin, about as good a chancellor as M. Boucherat, died very *à-propos*, in the month of February, 1717, and was replaced by M. d'Agueſſeau. I will ſpeak of this gentleman in his turn, as well as of the other miniſters of the preſent reign; in the mean

mean time, I muſt again obſerve, that of the three laſt chancellors of Lewis XIV. M. de Pontchartrain was certainly the moſt able. He had been a long time counſellor of the parliament of Paris; abandoned by his relations the Phillippeaux de la Vrilliere, a branch of which vegetated in the place of ſecretary of ſtate; and was nevertheleſs jealous of the Phillippeaux of Pontchartrain, who were deſcended from the firſt who had held that employ by means of Mary of Medicis. M. de Pontchartrain was afterwards, for twenty years, firſt preſident of the parliament of Bretagne: he not only made himſelf eſteemed in that province, by his equity and knowledge, but he gave proofs of firmneſs, ability and addreſs in managing the Bretons, who have ever been very difficult to govern. It may eaſily be judged, that he had other affairs, when he was miniſter of the finances. But they ceaſed to give him trouble the moment he became nothing more than a miniſter of juſtice. The chancellorſhip was very eaſy in his time; the chief magiſtrate being too much taken up with paſſing edicts of finance, and creating offices, had no time to make

make wiſe regulations; alſo, if he had no trouble he had no honour.

Let us now conſider the adminiſtration of finances under the late king. The great Colbert died in 1683; he was ſucceeded by M. Pelletier, a very worthy man, and who had behaved perfectly well in every department he had filled; but he was not fit for that of the finances, eſpecially in time of war, which happened as ſoon as he went into office. Supplies were difficult to obtain, and conſequently burthenſome; M. Pelletier made uſe of ſuch as occurred to him, which he diſtributed with all imaginable juſtice and equity; but he could not prevent the impoſts he had laid on from doing a real injury to the ſtate. He had no opportunity of making uſeful arrangements, after having been obliged to employ the moſt pernicious means. The Chancellor Le Tellier, who was alive when M. Pelletier went into adminiſtration, was right in ſaying to Lewis XIV. that the new comptroller, although an honeſt man, and had great application, was unfit for the finances: he gave a bad reaſon for this, by adding, that

that he was of too mild a diſpoſition. His Majeſty replied, that it was preciſely on that account he had made choice of him: this was a fine and noble ſentiment; but the king and the chancellor were equally deceived in their opinion of the defects of M. Pelletier. This appeared clearly, upon his being ſucceeded in 1690, by M. de Pontchartrain, who was not over mild, although equally equitable in the uſe of means to which he was obliged to have recourſe, undoubtedly with regret; and which were the more cruel, by reaſon of his being obliged to encreaſe them very conſiderably: the people cried out, but they ſubmitted, for the king's authority was uniformly and generally eſtabliſhed. M. de Pontchartrain was fortunate enough to get rid of the finances in 1690, and they were given to M. de Chamillart, of whom the king was very fond, which indeed he merited in ſome degree. This miniſter, without being either weak or quite incapable of buſineſs, was not equal to his place: but who would have been equal to it in ſuch unhappy times? What could a comptroller do but repeat, and augment the burthens, and

double

double burthens of the people: this is what M. de Chamillart did; he ſunk under the weight of affairs, retired from the miniſtry in 1708, and died in 1721. M. Deſmarets, nephew to M. Colbert, took his place; the choice of this gentleman was perhaps the beſt that could be made: but did M. Colbert, himſelf get well over it in 1708, 1709, and ſome of the following years? No. It is only neceſſary to read the memoir which M. Deſmarets preſented to the regent, to become acquainted with all the difficulties he had to encounter: this memoir is a melancholy proof of the deſolating evils with which France was at that time afflicted; it expoſes the ſituation the kingdom was in, and no good Frenchman can refrain from weeping at the recital. M. Deſmarets ſays therein, that the king aſſured him he knew the ſtate of his finances; that he did not expect from him impoſſibilities; and if he ſucceeded, he would do him the moſt important ſervice, but if he was unfortunate in his endeavours, he ſhould not impute to him the leaſt blame. Nothing could be more reaſonable; for it would have been impoſſible to have re-eſtabliſhed the finances

finances as circumſtances then were. M. Deſmarets did his beſt; he continued in place, until after the death of Lewis XIV. and died in 1721, the ſame year with M. de Chamillard: he left among other evils, two many-headed monſters, which it was neceſſary to deſtroy—notes of the State and notes of the Mint.—We ſhall ſee what became of theſe in the following reign.

The adminiſtration of foreign affairs, the moſt important of all departments, had been entruſted in 1679, to M. Colbert of Croiſſy, brother to the great Colbert; he died in 1690: his ſon, M. de Torcy, had had the reverſion of his office and department given him the year before; but at the death of his father he was found too young to replace him, although he was thirty years of age: he was put under the direction of M. Amaud, of Pomponne, who had already filled the department from 1671, to 1679, when he was obliged to retire, although accuſed of nothing but negligence: he was otherwiſe moſt polite and reſpectable; but like the family of the Amauds, ſuſpected of Janſeniſm, which was at that time a crime at

Court. M. de Pomponne, guided his ſon in law three years; after which, the latter was in a ſituation to ſhew what he was and what he could do; he kept his place until the death of Louis XIV. His conduct ſince that epocha has been that of a true philoſopher, and ought to be an example to the old miniſters. For my part, who am not yet become one, I mean to gather from the converſation of this reſpectable man, principles of conduct for the time when this ſhall happen, and for that, when I ſhall be ſo no longer. If ever the memoirs which he has done me the favour to communicate to me be printed, his manner of thinking, and the qualities of his mind, will be ſeen without diſguiſe; and M. de Torcy will be looked upon as a claſſical author, proper to inſtruct Miniſters of foreign affairs, both for the time preſent and to come. They will be taught how to act in caſes of the greateſt delicacy. Thoſe which M. de Torcy had to encounter were certainly very embaraſſing, but in all the misfortunes which befell the old age of Lewis XIV. his miniſter of finances was moſt to be pitied.

The

The war department had been given, at the death of M. de Louvois, which happened in 1691, to M. de Barbezieux, his ſon, who held it ten years. This ſecretary of ſtate, who had good natural ſenſe, a great aptitude to buſineſs, a quick and lively conception, and a great habitude of detail, to which he had been in the early part of his life formed by his father, had alſo great defects. He had been ſpoiled in his youth, by every body, except his father; he was a libertine, diſſipated, and impertinent; he ſometimes treated the military too lightly, who, according to their cuſtom, ſpared nothing, not even meanneſſes, when favors were to be obtained by them, and complained haughtily the moment nothing more was to be hoped for. He went to his offices from neceſſity, but was always treated with great reſpect, becauſe the ſon of M. de Louvois, who had, as we may ſay, created them, could not fail of inſpiring veneration, and even attachment. Lewis XIV. who knew all the defects of M. de Barbezieux, complained of them privately, and ſpoke to him ſometimes in a ſharp and particular manner; but he ſuffered him to remain ſtill in place,

becauſe he ſaw how important it was to preſerve in his deportment, the ſyſtem and principles of M. de Louvois. M. de Barbezieux never entered the council of ſtate; it is ſaid that he burned with rage to ſee M. de Chamillard, whom he had often made wait in his father's and his own anti chamber, a member of it. But, according to all appearances, the ruinous and mortal alliance which M. de Barbezieux wiſhed to make, of a life of libertiniſm and diſſipation, with the buſineſs and multiplied expeditions which the ſituation of France required, (Lewis XIV. having accepted the teſtament of Charles II. and ſent the Duke of Anjou, his grandſon, into Spain,) was what brought on the violent illneſs which carried him in a few days to the grave. M. Fagon, firſt phyſician to the king, pronounced his illneſs mortal, the firſt moment he ſaw him after he was attacked by it. He informed the king of it, who ſeemed but little affected at it. M. de Barbezieux died the fifth of January 1701, and the unhappy Chamillard was immediately charged with his department, in addition to that of the finances. I could here make great and juſt reflections upon

upon the incompatibility of theſe two departments. Moreover they could not be more improperly united than in the perſon of M. de Chamillard; but a glorious reign of fifty years had inſpired Lewis XIV. with the preſumption not only to believe that he knew how to chuſe his miniſters, but that he could teach them their duty, and direct their operations: he certainly deceived himſelf. It depended on him alone to unite in the ſame perſon the two important employs of Colbert and Louvois, but, it was not in his power to ſupply the want of their abilities. It is not that M. de Chamillard was a man without merit; he gave, early in life, proofs of a rare probity, from which he never varied. But, if a want of probity renders the greateſt talents uſeleſs, and even dangerous; on the other hand, this great virtue, being alone, ſupplies not the want of them, nor that of knowledge. Finally, at the end of ſix or ſeven years, M. de Chamillard ſunk under the weight of buſineſs, which he diſcharged as well as he could, but to which he was never equal. He quitted firſt the finances, and ſoon afterwards the war department. Lewis XIV. incorrigible

in his opinion of being more able than all his miniſters, made M. Voiſin his ſucceſſor, who knew leſs of affairs than M. de Chamillard. The great proofs which this miniſter gave of his abilities in the war department, were not what procured him the elevated place of chancellor, which he became poſſeſſed of in 1714; this was the price of his compliance with the abſolute will of his maſter, who, far from having learned anything from his misfortunes, conſoled himſelf by believing he ſhould find reſources in the choice he made of his miniſters. M. Voiſin was, till the death of the late king, at the head of the magiſtracy, and of military affairs; cares very different in their objects, which ought not to be intruſted to the ſame perſon, but whoſe principles are not ſo wide of each other as might be imagined. There are maxims common to every kind of adminiſtration; men who are without them are incapable of any. On the other hand, there are particular ones, according to the nature of affairs and circumſtances, which occur. M. de Seignelai replaced M. Colbert, his father, in the marine department only; with the defects

which ſons of miniſters generally have, when they become miniſters themſelves, which are ſelf-ſufficiency, preſumption and levity. He had, however, certain talents, and ſupported the honor of the French marine, which was, in ſome meaſure, created by his father; but he deviated from the principles upon which it had been formed: it was with a view to commerce, to make it flouriſh, to extend and encourage it, that M. Colbert engaged Lewis XIV. to build ſhips. He was controller general, and made the marine department depend upon commerce and the finances; his ſon, who had wit, ambition, and audacity, confined to the marine department alone, looked upon it in quite another point of view: the finances were in other hands; he ſaw how deſirous Lewis XIV. was of conqueſts, and of ruling in Europe. It was by taking advantage of theſe diſpoſitions in the king, that M. Louvois gained the confidence of the monarch; M. de Seignelai wiſhed to rival the miniſter of the war department; he undertook to make the arms of France as powerful by ſea as they were by land; he bombarded Genoa, cruſhed the Algerines, had ambaſſadors

from Siam brought to France, in the king's veſſels, and l d them about Verſailles. The year following he cannonaded Tunis and Tripoly, and gave brilliant entertainments to the king, in his caſtle of Sceaux; finally, he attacked the Dutch by ſea, and undertook to re-eſtabliſh James II. upon the throne of England, from which the Prince of Orange, his ſon in law, had driven him. In 1690, the laſt year of his life, he ſaw the king's fleet gain two battles in the channel. At length he died, and, after his death, Lewis XIV. re-united once more, and very properly, the adminiſtration of the marine to the finances; but M. de Pontchartrain was much embarraſſed in finding reſources in one to ſupport the other.

This gentleman became chancellor, and left the marine department to his ſon, whom he had married to Mademoiſelle de la Roche, Foucaud de Roye, who died, leaving him an only ſon, the preſent Count of Maurepas. I dare not give the portrait of M. de Pontchartrain, junior; this I leave to others, who had buſineſs with him during his adminiſtration, and are ſtill of his acquaintance.

ance*. I have been assured that he has pointed out the danger of inheritance in places of confidence and administration; and that the public, far from regretting his going out of office, thought themselves happy on getting clear of him, at the death of the king.

Little need be said upon the department and history of Messieurs de Philippeaux de la Vrilliere, de Chateau Neuf, and of Saint Florentin: these were the surnames of the sons of that family of secretaries of state, which may be traced back to the first race of our kings. It is to be believed that Paul Philippeaux de Pontchartrain had merit, or understood, at least, political intrigue; since after being twelve or fifteen years clerk to M. M. de Rovol and de Villeroy, he was made, in 1600, secretary to Mary of Medicis, in her coactive power. This queen had confidence enough in him to make him secretary of state, as soon as she became regent. He died in 1621; his eldest son, who was counsellor in the parliament, son in law to

* He was alive in 1736, the time when these Essays were written. He died the year following.

to the famous Advocate General Talon, did not ſucceed him; his place went to his younger brother, Raymond Philippeaux de Herbaut, who was at firſt ſecretary to the privy-council, afterwards treaſurer of the caſual revenues, and at length of the ſavings. He died in 1629, and his office remained to the younger branch in prejudice of the elder, which did not return to it until eighty years afterwards. M. d' Herbaut was replaced by Lewis Phillippeaux de la Vrilliere, who was ſixty-two years ſecretary of ſtate under the reigns of Lewis XIII. and XIV.; but he made ſo little ſtir at court and in the ſtate, that we ſhould not know he ever exiſted, were it not for the great number of edicts, declarations and letters patent he ſigned, and did not his name appear on the liſt of ſecretaries of ſtate. He inherited the fortune of the famous Particelly d'Emery, his father-in-law, who, after having been the moſt terrible partizan, and cruel extortioner under the reign of Lewis XIII. became in the adminiſtration of Mazarine, ſuperintendant of the finances. Baltazar Philippeaux, who was counſellor, clerk of the parliament, left the church to ſucceed his father,

father, and died in 1700; he was called M. de Chateau Neuf. His ſon took again the name of la Vrilliere, and it was this gentleman who ſigned, perhaps, the moſt diſpatches; for, at the beginning of the regency, the Duke of Orleans, wiſhing to diſcharge all the ſecretaries of Lewis XIV. kept M. de la Vrilliere only, becauſe he appeared to him a man of little conſideration. The adminiſtration of affairs in general was given to different councils, but every thing neceſſary to be ſigned by order came under his pen; he died in 1725. His ſon, the Count of Saint Florentin replaced him; but his department has been put upon the ſame footing as that of his father, under Lewis XIV. The liſt of affairs entruſted to him appears of conſiderable length in the Royal Calendar; in reality, nothing of importance devolves upon him; he ſigns and diſpatches, as did his father and grandfather.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXXIV.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE REGENT DULY EXEMPLIFIED.

IF I were not ſure of writing for myſelf only, I ſhould tremble at giving my opinion of the miniſters of the preſent reign. Some of them are yet alive, and others belong to families now in favor: on the othe hand, if I write not at preſent what I have ſeen and known, important and inſtructive truths, will, perhaps, eſcape poſterity. I will therefore explain myſelf with the liberty of a man who neither hopes nor fears, nor has any intereſt in the ſucceſs or failure of any party, and who ſpeaks to a poſterity, perhaps, very remote.

The Regent had no ſooner taken the reins of government than he propoſed a form of adminiſtration quite different from that of Lewis XIV. Whether it was from a ſpirit of innovation, which is almoſt inevitable at the

the beginning of a reign, or from a wish to avoid the reproach cast on the late king and his ministers, of being despotic and arbitrary, he confided each part of administration to as many councils; gave full activity to those formed in the preceding reign, for the finances, commerce, and foreign affairs, and created others for the war and marine departments; he was even desirous of establishing one for ecclesiastical affairs, but this was attended with great difficulties. All these particular councils were without prejudice to the council general of the Regency, from which they might be looked upon as so many emanations, and that of the malecontents, which has always been directed by the chancellor. I have already said that M. Voisin filled this place at the death of Lewis XIV. that he died in 1717, and was succeeded by M. d'Agueſſeau, who is still invested with that dignity. If piety, and all the virtues which derive from it, probity, erudition, a taste for letters, and great sense, but of a different kind from that which administration requires, could make a perfect chancellor, M. d'Agueſſeau would certainly be one; but other talents

are neceſſary to perform the duties of ſo important an office. The chancellor ought to unite every thing that conſtitutes a great magiſtrate, to that which makes a great miniſter; he has buſineſs continually with men of the law; he is their chief, and ought to underſtand their language, know their forms, and poſſeſs the art of conducting courts of every kind: he is at the head of one very difficult to govern, namely the council. On the other hand, he is the king's miniſter, and ought to maintain his authority, by carefully obſerving to conciliate acts with forms, a negligence of which might make the beſt concerted enterprizes fail, and ſuch as would be the moſt advantageous to the king and people. He ought, if it be poſſible, to gain the conſideration and eſteem of the magiſtracy; but he ſhould not be afraid of it: it is his duty to make it reſpectable, but not to eſteem any member of it more than he merits; not to heſitate in reforming unjuſt judgements, and in puniſhing iniquitous and partial judges; but he ſhould ever give his reaſons publicly, and expoſe the faults he is obliged to repreſs; he ought particularly to diſtinguiſh between

thoſe of ignorance and negligence from ſuch as are of a more ſerious kind. Like all the other miniſters, he ſhould ſometimes make uſe of the two-edged ſword of royal authority; but it behoves nobody more than himſelf to prove that he has conſtantly kept a watchful eye over it.

M. d'Agueſſeau has perhaps too great a reſpect for the perſons of Magiſtrates; he always gives them an advantage over him; and ſince the unhappy epocha of the venality of offices, they are far from always meriting ſuch attentions. The Regent made his Court to the Parliament, at a time when he thought he ſtood in need of its aſſiſtance, by conferring the firſt dignity in the kingdom upon the Attorney General; but men of the robe are apt to receive every thing offered to them as due to their merit, and to form new pretenſions to obtain ſtill ſomething more. They ſometimes carry theſe to ſuch exceſs, that it becomes neceſſary to check them, were it only for form's ſake, even when they may, upon the whole, be juſtly founded. This is what M. d'Agueſſeau was by no means fit for,

and

and what obliged the Regent to have recourſe to my father in delicate caſes. Moreover, M. d'Agueſſeau has another great defect, which is that of being too ſlow in deciding on great affairs. The functions of Advocate General, which he has performed, have accuſtomed him to weigh opinions, and to take his reſolution with difficulty; he heſitates even afterwards concerning its rectitude, and ſeems to wiſh he could retract it; but if this were the time to correct any error, inſtead of doing it he would commit others. I have ſeen him, for the purpoſe of coming to a deciſion, call to his aid one of his children, who was young, and not capable of making his reſpectable father take the beſt reſolution; on which account a lady of his acquaintance, a very ſenſible woman, ſaid to him one day, "take "care Mr. Chancellor what you do; you, "though very learned, doubt of every "thing, and your younger ſon doubts of "nothing; you will never do any thing "well in this manner." In fact, the conſcience of this great Magiſtrate is as delicate as his mind is timid, and he torments himſelf with continual ſcruples.

My

My father was of a very different character, knowing how to determine himself with promptitude, and to hold firmly to the resolution he had taken. Being charged twenty years with the Police of Paris, he was accustomed to that kind of detail, to that sagacity which enabled him to find in an instant the point of difficulty, and the means of resolving it. He was intelligent; had a long and perfect knowledge of forms, and knew how to apply them to circumstances, even those of necessity, with the greatest advantage. He knew the Parliament, as our great Generals know those with whom they have a long time been at war, as the Duke of Vendôme might know the Prince Eugene, and the Marshal Villars, Marlborough. He did not personally hate this body, he even respected it, and was allied to the most considerable members of it, by his wife, who was of the family of Caumartin, and by his grandmother, niece to the Chancellor de Chiverny. He owed his robe to these alliances. The functions of lieutenant of the police are a mixture of civil magistracy and political administration; to fill this place it is necessary to unite all

the abilities of a great politician, and I can aſſert, without prejudice, that my father had them all. Moreover he knew the court, and how to manage men of rank, without offending or fearing them: to this effect he uſed the advantages of his birth, and made a merit of his modeſty; whilſt preſidental haughtineſs obſcured thoſe who bore a diſtinguiſhed and illuſtrious name in our hiſtory. He was amiable in ſociety, and the moment after his contracted brow and black wig had made the populace tremble, the agreeableneſs of his converſation, and eaſy good breeding, proved he was fit to keep the beſt company. People were perſuaded that the art of ſpying, which he carried to the laſt degree of perfection, put him in poſſeſſion of the ſecrets of every family; but he made uſe of his information with ſo much diſcretion, that he never diſturbed the repoſe of any body, and preſerved every myſtery in his own boſom, never proceeding unſeaſonably, and always for the welfare of the ſtate, and that of individuals. I am obliged to acknowledge that his private morals were not perfectly pure. I knew him too well to ſuſpect him of being a devotee,

votee, but he made religion and decency reſpectable, and ſet the example whilſt he was preſcribing laws to enforce the obſervation of them. Such a man was neceſſary to the Regent, to make up for the weakneſs of M. d'Agueſſeau, at a time when government was obliged to keep the parliament in awe. He was keeper of the ſeals in 1718, and the records of juſtice for that year contain remarkable, and I will dare to add, precious proofs of my father's ſenſe, abilities, and firmneſs of mind.

As long as he thought the ſyſtem of M. Law neceſſary for the good and intereſt of the ſtate, he eſtabliſhed and maintained the credit of the bank; he diſcharged, in this manner, the immenſe debts of the crown, and enriched it with real treaſures, either in ſpecie or credit, which is the ſame thing, provided the latter be generally adopted; for after all, even riches are matters of opinion. My father employed, like a good citizen, all the reſources which his intelligence and character acquired him, to procure honour to the Regent and advantage to the ſtate. But, when he was fully convinced that the abuſe of bank notes was carried to an extreme,

and it would be betraying the nation to give them an unjuſt and forced credit, he reſigned the places which put him at the head of theſe operations. His retreat finally diſcovered the illuſion; but the miſchief was over, and irreparable, before he retired. The Regent never withdrew from him either his kindneſs or confidence. He lived upwards of a year after his retreat, and did not die of vexation; he had too great a ſoul to ſink under its weight. He was by no means accuſtomed to the management of the finances; but a ſtateſman ſeizes all the objects of adminiſtration in general—knows how to procure aſſiſtance from the *details* he does not perfectly underſtand—and to command that to be done which he either cannot or will not execute himſelf.

My father died in 1721. M. d'Agueſſeau, who was recalled in 1720, was ſent in 1722 to Freſne, and the ſeals were given to M. Fleuriau d'Armenonville, one of thoſe chancellors whoſe merit conſiſted in their pliancy in receiving the impreſſions of the prime miniſter, and of putting the great ſeal and moſt reſpectable marks of ſovereign authority,

thority, to reſolutions in which they had themſelves no ſhare. After the diſgrace of M. le Duc, the adminiſtration of royal juſtice was put into the hands of two men, equally intelligent and equitable, although of very different characters. M. d'Agueſſeau found himſelf again at the head of the council, and M. Chavelin had the ſeals.

The chancellorſhip was not, like every other department, ſubſervient to the council; but the finances were not exempt from it. M. Demarets was entirely diſcharged; there was no longer a controller-general; none but the Regent gave orders, as the king had formerly done. M. le Mareſhal de Villeroy was named chief of the council of finances, but purely honorary, and the Duke of Noailles preſident; although the duke had conſiderable wit, and as much knowledge as could be expected from a young man of the court, he could not, certainly, conduct this important adminiſtration, nor underſtand any thing of the details in which it was neceſſary he ſhould take the greateſt part; he had in his character an indeciſion, from a perpetual heſitation, which

muſt frequently have prevented him from acting well. I do not believe what I have heard of the defects of his heart; perhaps thoſe who have ſpoken to me of them were prejudiced againſt his perſon; it is, however, certain that, with great ſenſe and abilties, he could not manage the finances. The Marquis d'Effiat, firſt equerry to the Duke of Orleans, was vice-preſident of the council, and ſtill leſs capable of buſineſs than the preſident; he did not, however, like the latter, turn the heads of his ſecretaries. Theſe gentlemen had under them nine counſellors of ſtate, to whom different parts of the adminiſtration were diſtributed; ſome were capable of the details entruſted to their care, others were not; but, if even they all had the ſame capacity and merit, a neceſſary union would not have reigned amongſt them, becauſe no one depended upon another; and, conſequently, the council did not act upon conſtant and uniform principles. I cannot too often repeat, upon this occaſion, that however uſeful councils are, when well directed, and although after having been conſulted upon general arrangements, ſage, meditated, and

wiſe

wiſe laws, have reſulted from their advice, they are equally dangerous, when, inſtead of leaving them the care of watching over authority, it is wholly abandoned to their diſcretion, they then degenerate into mere bear garden meetings; they quarrel, diſpute, no one underſtands what he is about; and hence nothing reſults but anarchy and confuſion. If arbitrary and abſolute authority degenerate into deſpotiſm, councils to which nothing is preſented in a prepared ſtate, and wherein their deciſions are not regulated, do ſtill more harm to public welfare. When the abuſes of the councils eſtabliſhed by the Duke of Orleans were perceived, and it appeared neceſſary to abrogate them, they were given a kind of *extreme unction*, by charging the Abby de Saint Pierre, who at firſt approved of them, to make the apology. He acquitted himſelf of this, by compoſing a work, intituled *La Polyſynodie*, or *L'Avantage de la Pluralité des Conſeils*; to which he added the following epigraph, taken from the Proverbs of Solomon: *Ubi multa conſilia, ſalus.* He was right to a certain degree, but he was obliged to acknowledge it to be equally neceſſary that ſome-

body ſhould be charged to prepare queſtions before they were ſubmitted to councils, and that authority ought to decide when they have been maturely diſcuſſed.

To return to the council of finance in particular, ſome changes were made in 1717, in the members of which it was compoſed, but no advantage derived from them. In 1718, my father was made preſident in the place of M. de Noailles; this gentleman had not perceived of what utility the ſyſtem of M. Law, well regulated and underſtood, might be, in liberating the ſtate from its debts, and in re-eſtabliſhing, at the ſame time, the finances and commerce. My father ſeized this idea, but he comprehended that it was neceſſary to direct and put bounds to its effects and conſequences; he gave to this object all poſſible attention; he employed his firmneſs to overcome the obſtacles which thoſe who were not perſuaded of the utility of the new ſyſtem, oppoſed to its eſtabliſhment: but alas! it was not long before he was obliged to uſe the ſame means to colour and hide the abuſes committed by the Regent, in the uſe he made of theſe reſources,

reſources, which are truly delicate in their application.

The Duke of Orleans had knowledge, ſagacity, and even vigour enough to conceive the merit of a great plan, and to identify his fame with the welfare of the kingdom he had to govern; but ſtrong paſſions, and a kind of weakneſs into which they betray men of the moſt enlightened underſtandings, carried him beyond the bounds he ought to have preſcribed himſelf: they transformed into a poiſon what ſhould have been a remedy; my father ſaw this, explained and repeated it—not to the public, from which a wiſe miniſter always conceals the evil he foreſees, but to him who was maſter to the Regent—to him only who could prevent or repair it; uſeleſs efforts! the bank loſt its credit. My father ſaw it was impoſſible to retrieve it; at length he abandoned, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, the ſtate to its unhappy fate, contented with not having made a fortune in a critical time, during which ſo many others had unjuſtly enriched, or imprudently ruined themſelves. The 5th of January 1720, M. Law

was

was named controller-general, and before the end of the year he was obliged to fly precipitately, and quit the kingdom.

M. Pelletier de la Houſſaye, chancellor to the Duke of Orleans, was appointed controller-general in his place; but he held his employ little more than a year. In the month of Auguſt 1722, he was replaced by M. Dodun, who kept his poſt till the year 1726, when the Duke was exiled. Theſe two controllers-general were but of a middling capacity: it was under the firſt of them that the great operation of the *Viſa* was begun, of which M. le Pelletier, member of the council of finance in the time of the Regency, and controller-general after M. Dodun, was the real author. He propoſed to examine the original of all the notes and debts, at the charge of the ſtate, to pay attention to thoſe whoſe object ſhould appear perfectly legal, in order to diſcharge them, but to annul ſuch as ſhould appear conſpicuouſly uſurious or exceſſive. This plan was good in itſelf, and it were to be wiſhed it had been carried into execution with a ſcrupulous exactitude; but the leaſt abuſe,

abuſe, or ſuſpicion of injuſtice, ſpoiled the whole. The ſyſtem of M. Law appeared preferable, on account of its being more expeditious, and as eaſy to keep within proper bounds: it was ſo in fact, but, as I have juſt obſerved, it was abuſed; and it was not till after it had been renounced, that the idea of the *Viſa* was again taken up, when it was ſtill more difficult of execution than at firſt; it therefore became the ſource of great abuſe and injuſtice.

M. le Pelletier was no more to be blamed for the preſent bad proceedings, than my father had been for all the evil which happened towards the end of M. Law's ſyſtem; but there was this great difference between them, M. d'Argenſon did not abandon the adminiſtration of finances until he ſaw they were ruined in ſpite of him, and M. le Pelletier took the title of controller-general after every thing was loſt by the *Viſa*. It is, however, important, to remark that the finances of France were ſoon re-eſtabliſhed, notwithſtanding the cataſtrophes of the bank and the *Viſa*; ſo true it is that in matters of finance, public credit and circulation find

their own level, like the water of the ſea, after ſtorms and tempeſts. There are but ſome particular fortunes which are loſt without reſource; a melancholy and fatal truth for many people in certain critical moments, but conſolatory to the ſtate. In 1726, M. Orry replaced M. Dodun: the apparently rough and auſtere character of this miniſter, does not prevent his being juſt, and even œconomical; he ſeconds, in this reſpect, the views of the Cardinal de Fleury, who has, moreover, the prudence and addreſs to make what is moſt agreeable in the adminiſtration of finances fall to his ſhare.

The miniſter of foreign affairs was, at the death of Lewis XIV, ſubject to a council as badly compoſed as that of the finances. The Marſhal d'Uxelles was preſident, and had neither a profound knowledge of affairs of this kind, nor real talents for adminiſtration; all his policy was that of a courtier, and, although marſhal of France, his military talent was confined to overawing ſubalterns; forcing them to diſcipline by great ſeverity, and dazzling them

them with haughtineſs and pomp. I was not much acquainted with the qualities of his heart, which have been the ſubject of much cenſure; but I remember his figure, which was very extraordinary; I know alſo that he lived in an elegant ſtile. His three aſſociates in council were the Abby Deſtrées, the Marquis of Canillac, and the Count of Chiverny: their heads were not much better than his own; but in other reſpects, the two laſt were men of wit: Chiverny had been ambaſſador at the court of Vienna, and Canillac was the intimate friend of Lord Stairs, ambaſſador from England. The Regent wiſhed to form connections with this power, and to change ſo completely the political ſyſtem, relative to his particular intereſts, that M. de Torcy was not only uſeleſs, but prejudicial to him: therefore although the Duke of Orleans could not but eſteem him, he left him in the council of the Regency, and gave him the ſuperintendance of the poſts, without permitting him to enter the council of foreign affairs; yet this council had no other guide or director than Pecquet, its ſecretary, and who had been clerk to M. de Torcy. The

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foreign miniſters knew not to whom they were to apply to treat upon buſineſs; a man who was not, nor ever had been of the council, was appointed to hear them; this was M. d'Armenonville, ordinary counſellor of ſtate, who had been intendant of the finances, and had bought the office of ſecretary of ſtate of M. de Torcy; but upon condition not to exerciſe the functions. In 1718, the Abby Dubois entered the council of foreign affairs; in 1719, the offices of ſecretary of ſtate having been re-eſtabliſhed, a fifth was created for the Abby, and to which was attached the department of foreign affairs. The council had then nothing more to do; Dubois became the ſole inſtrument, and the ſole organ of the policy of the Regent, of his correſpondence with the courts of London and Vienna, and of his great cavils with Spain and Alberoni. It was during this adminiſtration that the treaty of the quadruple alliance, &c. was concluded.

Dubois, who at length became cardinal, was one of thoſe men againſt whom many things may, in all ſafety of conſcience be ſaid,

ſaid, and to whom there is nevertheleſs ſome good to be attributed; but we ought, however, to be careful of what we ſay in his favour, for fear of being thought declared partiſans of a bad character. Born in the loweſt order of the Bourgeoiſie of Brive, in Limouſin, he was firſt attached to the Father le Teller, confeſſor to the king, who gave him an opportunity of acquiring a good education; afterwards to a vicar of Saint Euſtache, whom he was fortunate enough to pleaſe, and who wiſhing to place in the tuition of the Duke of Chartres, afterwards Duke of Orleans and Regent, a man incapable of giving him umbrage, procured this honour to Dubois. He was at firſt no more than ſub-preceptor under M. de Saint-Laurant, to whoſe place he afterwards ſucceeded. He pleaſed his pupil by flattering his paſſions; but the true *coup de partie* the Abby Dubois made, and by which his fortune began, was his determining the Duke of Orleans to marry Madamoiſelle de Blois, natural daughter to Lewis XIV. notwithſtanding the great oppoſition and repugnance of MADAME.

In thoſe delicate affairs, ſilent and obſcure, intri-

intrigues are the means which are moſt advantageouſly employed; it was therefore Dubois who concluded this great buſineſs. Continuing to make himſelf agreeable, *per fas et nefas*, to his pupil, (now become his maſter) and having endeavoured to inſpire him with vice rather than virtue, he enjoyed the greateſt credit from the beginning of the Regency; having moreover much wit and effrontery, and not being held by any conſideration capable of reſtraining a good citizen, he put himſelf at the head of ſeveral intrigues, whoſe object was the particular intereſt of the Duke of Orleans, and not conformable to thoſe of the younger king and the ſtate. His conduct was that of baſe, but political ſpirits; who, when they find obſtacles on one ſide, turn to the other. He ſpoke naturally very well when he was not embarraſſed; but when he treated of affairs with people of whom he was not ſure, he heſitated and ſtammered, perhaps to give himſelf time to think of what he ought to anſwer: he was deceitful and guilty of the greateſt falſehoods, but he did not ſpread with the ſame effrontery that he conceived them. Capable of the greateſt atrocities,

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he was ſometimes convicted of them; then he trembled, bluſhed, and was confuſed; but he was always very far from changing for the better, or repenting: his manners and converſation formed a perfect contraſt with his eccleſiaſtical habit: he ſwore, blaſphemed, and ſaid the moſt indecent things againſt religion: but he ought to be reproached moſt with having perſuaded his prince, that there was not in the world either real piety or true probity,—that every thing conſiſted in arriving at a propoſed end, by keeping ſecret the means made uſe of for that purpoſe. He extended the principles of this bad education to the Ducheſs of Berry, daughter of the Regent. It was this man whom the Duke of Orleans made ſecretary of ſtate for foreign affairs, at a time when he found himſelf obliged to reſtore to theſe offices their functions.

The connection of the Regent with the Engliſh, were managed by the Abby Dubois and Canillac, with Earl Stanhope and Lord Stair; but Dubois having poſſeſſed himſelf of the real ſecret of that arrangement, was the only perſon who could follow it up. He

was certainly a penſioner of England, that is, of the enemies of the ſtate, and the catholic religion; but as it was for the Regent he intrigued, he feared nothing from him. In 1720, this worthy eccleſiaſtic was promoted to the archbiſhopric of Cambray, and obtained it with circumſtances which, for the honour of religion I dare not inſert. In 1721, he was made cardinal, and in 1723 was declared prime miniſter, when the Regent was obliged to give up to the king, at leaſt in appearance, the helm of the ſtate. It may eaſily be believed that the Duke of Orleans thought of making him oſtenſible miniſter only, and of being the real one himſelf: yet who knows that Dubois would not have remained prime miniſter if the Regent had died before him; but it happened to the contrary, and the Duke of Orleans was obliged to take this title. M. de Morville, ſon of M. d'Armenonville, keeper of the ſeals, who had the marine department, took that of foreign affairs, and kept it under the authority of the duke of Bourbon, who had the title of prime miniſter after the Duke of Orleans. This prince had no merit which

made him fit for this place, his ſole recommendation was the greatneſs of his birth; he was merely oſtenſible, and every body knew the agent by whom he was governed. M. de Morville was a man of but middling abilities, yet he had good ſenſe, and a juſt judgment: he poſſeſſed a ſecondary merit, which we diſtinguiſh by the name of *bon ecouteur*, (a perſon who hearkens patiently to what is ſaid to him); he never ſpoke but in his turn, nor without giving himſelf time to think of what he ought to ſay; then whatever he ſaid was to the point. Men went from his audiences pleaſed with having been attentively heard. He retired in Auguſt 1727; his father gave up the ſeals at the ſame time, and they were both replaced by M. Chauvelin, in whom their titles were united. The father died the year following, the ſon in 1732.

The council of war, eſtabliſhed under the regency, had for its chief the marſhal Villars, already famous for his victories gained over the enemy, and who ſeemed to have reſtored the tarniſhed glory of the arms of France to its former luſtre. This gene-

ral's defects were vanity and presumption, or at least all the appearances of them; otherwise, he had a greatness of mind, good sense, and marked talents for war. But however brilliant these advantages may be, they are not sufficient to make a good minister for the department he held. Therefore the Regent, in placing him at the head of the council, gave him nothing more than a public representation, without the real administration. The marshal flattered himself he should have the distribution of favours, but means were soon found to take it away from him; it was decided that this distribution should be made in full council. It would have been a perpetual source of frightful dissensions among the members; but they liked better to operate each of them with the Regent, relative to the different military corps over which they were particularly charged to watch, and leave him to pronounce the appointment; this is really what happened, and the Regent disposed of favours with as much authority as Lewis XIV. had done. Nothing remained to the military counsellors, than the care of digesting some ordonnances and regulations

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of diſcipline: and when they propoſed any new expences, they found themſelves ſubject to the examination and controul of the two loweſt members of the council of war; men of the robe, who had in their departments, war, finances, contracts, diſtribution of funds — the real buſineſs of preceding war miniſters, and the only one with which they ought to be charged. One was M. de Saint Conteſt, who had been a long time intendant of the frontier provinces; the other M. le Blanc, maſter of requeſts. Treaſurers, commiſſaries of war, and contractors, knew theſe two gentlemen only; conſequently the whole machine of war turned upon them; therefore M. le Blanc ſoon made himſelf maſter of the ground; and when the ſecretaries of ſtate were re-eſtabliſhed, he became one of them. The form of the council of war exiſted, however, for ſome years; but M. le Blanc having united all the details of M. de Saint Conteſt to his own, was the ſpring and pivot of it. He had the ſame credit as M. de Chamillard and M. de Louvois ever had before him. Certainly he was not without talents and addreſs for his perſonal conduct,

and he had a great knowledge of the buſineſs of the war office; but the details of finance and military adminiſtration, became very delicate in the midſt of the pecuniary embarraſſiments occaſioned by the ſyſtem of M. Law, and afterwards by the *Viſa*. In 1723, M. le Blanc was diſplaced, and ſent to the Baſtille, with the intention of proſecuting him. His department was filled by M. Breteuil, intendant of Limoge, a mild and pliant man, but extremely ignorant; every body knows that the eſſential ſervice which he rendered to the cardinal Dubois, procured him this place; he ſupported himſelf under the duke, by extreme complaiſance to perſons in favour. Meſſrs. de Belleiſle and de Seichelles, intimate friends and counſellors of M. le Blanc, were alſo put into the Baſtille, ſome months after him. The ſtorm continued to threaten them during the whole adminiſtration of the duke; but as ſoon as the prince was ſent to Chantilly, every thing changed; M. de Breteuil returned to place, and the faction of Belleiſle and de Seichelles ſent in their turn the two brothers, all powerful under the Duke of Orleans, one to the Baſtille, the other into

into exile. In 1728 M. le Blanc died; M. Dangervilliers, intendant of Paris, who had for a long time occupied the ſame poſt in the province of Alſace, took his place, and M. de Breteuil remained aloof. M. Dangervilliers, ſon or grandſon of a famous partiſan, who lived under the adminiſtration of Colbert, is deſcended from a celebrated phyſician and botaniſt, has wit and talents, with defects, and ſome ridicule in his character.

The council of the marine was compoſed like that of war, and had the ſame fate; the Count of Toulouſe was its honorary chief, the Marſhal d'Eſtrées, preſident, and it was blended with ſome officers and old intendants of the marine, who were charged with all the details. La Chapelle, an old firſt clerk of M. de Pontchartrain, was ſecretary: as the marine was now reduced to a mere trifle, this council appeared to be of little importance. As ſoon as the ſecretaries of ſtate were re-eſtabliſhed, M. d'Armenonville, who had bought the employ of M. de Torcy, had the affairs of this department, the Abby Dubois being

charge des affaires etrangeres, as fifth ſecretary of ſtate. M. de Maurepas retook the office of the Pontchartrains, his father and grandfather; but he had the expediting the affairs of the King's houſehold, and of Paris only, under the inſpection and orders of his father in-law, la Vrilliere. This continued till 1722, when M. d'Armenonville became keeper of the ſeals; M. de Morville being ſecretary of ſtate for the marine department. At the death of the Cardinal Dubois in 1723, M. de Morville took the adminiſtration of foreign affairs, and M. de Maurepas had the whole department poſſeſſed by his father previous to the death of Lewis XIV. The marine council had been ſuppreſſed in 1722; after having been for ſome time in a languiſhing ſtate. The young marine miniſter is more amiable, but ſtill more ignorant than his father was; he delights in pleaſantries, which may be called the pranks of a young courtier, rather than malice and acrimony of diſpoſition, of which it was ſaid his father was capable. But he enjoyed too ſoon the charms and advantages of adminiſtration, and it does not appear that he is yet acquainted with its duties and principles.

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He was but eighteen years of age, when his clerks ſaid to him, "Monſeigneur, amuſe "yourſelf, leave buſineſs to us; if you "wiſh to oblige any perſon, make your "intentions known to us, and we will find "proper means to give ſucceſs to what-"ever you pleaſe. Moreover, forms and "rules are learnt in proportion as affairs "and opportunity preſent themſelves, and "enough of theſe will paſs before your "eyes, to give you in a ſhort time more "experience than we have." It muſt, however, be agreed, that we may paſs a long life in labouring without principles, and never learn any thing, and that experience is rather the fruit of reflection upon what we have ſeen, than the reſult of an infinity of facts to which we have not paid all the attention they merited.

A council for home affairs was formed in 1716. The Duke of Antin was preſident; the Marquiſſes of Bringhen and Brancas were placed with ſome counſellors of ſtate, *maîtres des requêtes*, and counſellors of parliament; this council was to be charged with the ſame object of adminiſtration as the preſent coun-

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cil of diſpatches. It exiſted till the re-eſtabliſhment of the ſecretaries of ſtate, that is to ſay, about three years; after which M. de la Vrilliere returned to the care of the provinces which had formerly belonged to him. M. d'Armenonville and Maurepas were charged with the reſt. The miniſters of foreign affairs and that of war, had authority at that time; it was not till afterwards that they were reſtored to their places.

At length, to all theſe councils was added one of commerce, the preſidency of which was given to the Marſhal Villeroy, a man of the world, to whom the Duke of Orleans was little diſpoſed to give employment and conſideration. With him was aſſociated many counſellors of ſtate, and *maîtres des requêtes*, to whom was diſtributed the care of different branches of commerce; and they were not only charged to watch over them, but to make proper regulations, whereby they might be augmented and improved. Nothing could be more intereſting to the ſtate, than what might reſult from ſuch a council; but it was neceſſary it ſhould be directed, that there ſhould be an

an unanimity in its operations, which ſhould all have tended to one end only; but this is what was wanting in that as well as in all the other councils: when the Marſhal Villeroy was diſgraced, it was deſtroyed, or, at leaſt, it remained two or three years in inaction. It was at length re-eſtabliſhed under the name of the royal council of commerce; the king preſided there as well as at the royal council of finances, that of diſpatches, and at the council of ſtate, properly ſo called. The names of a part of the miniſters, and of ſome counſellors of ſtate, are upon the liſt of the members of this council; the controller general of finances, and the ſecretary of ſtate for the marine department, are eſſential members of it. There was a board of commerce more numerous eſtabliſhed to propoſe ſuch buſineſs as was to be laid before the council. The offices of the intendants of commerce, created under Lewis XIV. were re-eſtabliſhed, and each commercial city ſent a deputy to Paris. All this preſents the idea of a wiſe and good adminiſtration; but it is, in reality, upon paper only; the royal council of commerce never aſſembled, the board

board but ſeldom, the intendants and deputies act with the controller general only, and know nobody but him; the latter are his clerks, the former his clients: finances and commerce may be ſaid to be the ſame thing in France, and to move round the ſame axis.

It ought to be concluded, from the ſuppreſſion of the councils eſtabliſhed under the regency, and the inactivity in which the principals of the royal councils which decorate our almanacks are ſuffered to languiſh, that it is not yet known in France what advantage may be derived from councils, diſtinguiſhing well what ought to be ſubmitted to their deliberation, from that which ſhould be left to the daily deciſion of miniſters of each department; and what ought to be laid before the king, from that which they may perſonally decide upon in their cabinets. All the ordonnances, and the general regulations, which form the law, and eſtabliſh principles in the adminiſtration, ought to be deliberated upon in council, diſcuſſed, ſeriouſly examined, and finally decided therein, as far as agrees with the

the conſtitution of a monarchy, wherein every council ought to be nothing more than a deliberative body. Every queſtion agitated there, ought to be clearly propoſed, and it is the duty of the miniſter to make this propoſition. Each miniſter ought to be the reporter of the affairs relative to his department, as he is to look to their execution when once they are regulated. I ſpeak not of little private affairs with which the board is at preſent amuſed, in the royal councils of finance and diſpatches, when they are aſſembled, but of general regulations, for which alone councils, at which the king aſſiſts in perſon, ſhould be called together. Miniſters are not ſufficiently aware of the importance it is to them to have guarantees for theſe regulations. By taking them upon themſelves, they are expoſed to become reſponſible for every difficulty they ſuffer either in the regiſtering or execution; they are frequently victims to their imprudence, and thus furniſh occaſions of being diſplaced. With reſpect to favours, councils ſhould be acquainted with the principles only upon which the miniſter propoſes them; but it is highly important even for miniſters,

miniſters, that theſe principles ſhould be ſomewhere depoſited; they ought to be their buckler to fortify themſelves againſt unjuſt demands: and it is highly neceſſary they ſhould thus defend themſelves. For one favour againſt rule and reaſon which the miniſter accords to thoſe whom he perſonally and really protects, he is obliged to grant twenty others to perſons protected by his patrons, and by thoſe to whom he cannot refuſe any thing; in that caſe, being preſſed, he knows not what to anſwer. If he refuſes to one what he grants to another, he creates to himſelf diſagreeable cavils. A wiſe man, on going into place, ought to take more meaſures to enable him to refuſe, without doing himſelf much harm, than to give every thing according to his fancy; for it is certain he can never bring about the latter. However, he ſhould always refuſe without caprice, and receive with mildneſs even the moſt unreaſonable demands; and, above all, never promiſe that which he is not ſure to perform: *Hoc opus, hic labor.*

ESSAY

ESSAY XXXV.

EXEMPLARY CHARACTER OF CARDINAL ROHAN

I HAVE juſt treated, in a long article, an important ſubject, to eſtabliſh occaſionally great maxims, and draw intereſting portraits. I dare aſſert their juſtneſs and reſemblance, having ſpoken according to perſonal and certain knowledge only: I have deſcribed ſtateſmen, or at leaſt thoſe who ſhould have been ſo. At preſent I mean to treat of the principles of conduct men ought to follow in private life, and in ſociety, always from my own exprience, or the examples of perſons with whom I have been moſt acquainted.

The moſt perfect model of a great and amiable man of rank is the Cardinal Rohan; although he is but a man of middling abilities, contracted in erudition and reading, has

has neither been charged with the adminiſtration of the higher departments, nor applied himſelf much to important affairs, he has a remarkable advantage over thoſe who have been deeply engaged in negociations and public buſineſs. He has neither the figure nor features of a prince fit to command armies; but he is the moſt handſome prelate in the world; and, when young, was a charming abby of quality. He maintained his theſis, in the Sorbonne, in a diſtinguiſhed manner; his leſſon was given him; but he retained it with facility, and delivered it with grace. Having obtained early the biſhoprick of Straſburgh, and the Cardinal's hat, he was charged with negotiations at the courts of ſeveral German princes, and in the Conclave at Rome, he always got through them with dignity and eaſe; and, certainly, if any body has been able to verify the ſingular and proverbial expreſſion, that *men of quality know every thing, without learning any thing*, it is the Cardinal de Rohan. His policy was always paſſive; he accommodated himſelf to time and place; to governments and circumſtances. With ſuch a conduct he might have

have appeared mean; but he knew always how to ſtamp his actions with a character of nobleneſs, in ſuch a manner as to be applauded by fools, and pardoned by men of underſtanding. He declared himſelf, according to circumſtances, in favour of the bull *Unigenitus*, or left the Janſeniſts to think as they thought proper. He was made a member of the council of the regency, at the end of the adminiſtration of the Duke of Orleans, to inſure the Cardinal Dubois the ſame rank as the Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarine had enjoyed in the council. It was perceived that Dubois had no right to paſs over ſuch a charm after eighty years interruption. The birth of M. de Rohan, and the dignities with which he was inveſted, independently of the cardinalſhip, made him ſuſceptible of it, but he was the forerunner only of a prime miniſter very unworthy of that high office; after all, what could the Cardinal Rohan loſe by this complaiſance? He acquitted himſelf of the ceremonies of the church, to which his office of great almoner obliged him, in the moſt becoming manner, without affecting too much devotion: neither is

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he accuſed of hypocriſy; nor can any reproach him with indecency. He behaves more nobly at Straſburgh and Saverne than any German prince, or even the eccleſiaſtical electors: his court and retinue are numerous and brilliant; with all this, he preſerves that air of decency which the diſtinguiſhed members of the French clergy have, and which is not to be found among thoſe of Germany and Italy: he is gallant, but he finds opportunities enough to ſatisfy his inclination to pleaſure with great princeſſes, fine women, and canoneſſes double proof, ſo as not to demean himſelf by gallantry; or, at leaſt, to be accuſed of low debauch. The cardinal, ſometimes, in ſpeaking of himſelf, modeſtly gives you to underſtand, there muſt be in him ſome reſemblance of Lewis XIV. as well in his perſon as his character; in fact, the Princeſs of Soubiſe, his mother, was very beautiful; we know that Lewis XIV. was in love with her, and the epocha of this *penchant* is near the year 1674, in which the Cardinal de Rohan was born. If there be any truth in this anecdote, we may add, that, deſcended from a very great prince, it is poſſible other

great

great princes owe to him their exiſtence. His politeneſs to individuals who go to ſee him, whether it be at his biſhopric, the court, or at Paris, proceeds certainly more from habitude than ſentiment; but carries ſo much the mark of friendſhip, that, even though perſuaded that it is not ſincere, men ſuffer themſelves to be ſeduced by it. As ſoon as you arrive he ſeems to have a thouſand things to ſay to you, as a confidential favorite, and ſoon afterwards he leaves you to ſpeak to another; but, whilſt he does what is moſt agreeable to himſelf, he ſeems to think only of leaving you maſter of his houſe, withdraws for fear of embarraſſing and importuning you, whilſt, on the contrary, you would embarraſs and importune him by prolonging your viſit. In a word, nobody poſſeſſes the talent of pleaſing more than the Cardinal de Rohan; but it does not belong to every one to make uſe of the ſame means. *Every body is not permitted to go to Corinth*; this old adage may be applied to the uſe of more than one amiable quality; there are people who may neglect ſome one of them; others who ought to

collect as many as poſſible, and who ſtill ſucceed with difficulty, notwithſtanding all the reſources, furniſhed them by nature.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXXVI.

ON PUNCTUALITY.

I WILL return in a moment to the art and means of pleaſing; but I wiſh to ſay a word more upon exactitude and punctuality: theſe are merits of the ſecond order; they ſeem to belong to ſubalterns only; yet they are ſometimes very valuable: I confeſs that I am ſcrupulouſly attached to them, although I have a ſtrong domeſtic example to the contrary. My father was the leaſt punctual of any man living; he never knew what it was o'clock; charged with an infinity of details, moſt of them very important, but of different kinds, he got through them when he could, or when he would, *by fits and ſtarts*, tho' interrupted inceſſantly by one or the other; but his ſure and active genius ſupplied every thing: he always found the end of his threads, although he broke them every moment; and embraced ſucceſſively an hundred different

objects, without confounding them. I admired this wonderful talent, but never perceived that I poſſeſſed it. I have introduced more method, order, and punctuality in my proceedings, but my brother took the reſolution of imitating my father. For my part, I thought it might be preſumptive to follow that route, when nature had not pointed it out. Moreover, when you are not ſure of being above proceeding methodically, and wiſh, notwithſtanding, to attain that elevation, you run a riſk of being unequal to your affairs, and of loſing and diſhonouring yourſelf.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXXVII.

ON THE ART OF PLEASING.

MONCRIF, who is attached to my brother, came to communicate to me his project of printing a book, intituled: *De la neceſſité et des moyens de plaire.* "My dear Moncrif," ſaid I to him, "nothing is ſo eaſy as to treat upon the firſt head of thy diſcourſe; all the world feels it; all the world has a deſire to pleaſe, but the means are extremely difficult to be found: it is a difficult, and very delicate matter to indicate the true ones; they depend upon a great number of circumſtances, which make them vary *ad infinitum.*" From this I entered with him into particulars, of which I have ſince committed a part to paper. After hearkening to me attentively, "Sir," anſwered he, humbly, "I will make uſe of the ſage reflections you have juſt communicated to me; but the plan of my work is not laid exactly in the manner you

propoſe."—"Thy work! is it already finiſhed?" replied I. "Yes, Sir, it is in the preſs." In fact, in a very little time afterwards, he brought it to me, printed and well bound: I have read it, and this reading has recalled to my mind what a man of wit, a friend of mine, once ſaid to me, as we were walking in a great library, where there were a multitude of books upon ſpeculative philoſophy, metaphyſics and morality: "*Here are*," ſaid he, "*thouſands of volumes, of which the greateſt number ought to be ſuppreſſed, and the reſt new modelled:*"—that of MONCRIF is ſo much the more of the latter deſcription, on account of its being very unanimatedly written; it is, therefore, tireſome, although a ſmall volume: he finiſhes with fairy tales, above the capacity of children, and not intereſting enough to men.

Moncrif ſaid himſelf that the marvellous could not be agreeable, but by the manner of repreſenting it; that otherwiſe improbability diſguſted and fatigued. His tales are the beſt proofs of this truth.

Moncrif's

Moncrif's mother was the widow of a *procureur*, called Paradis. She was a woman of wit, and knew how to uſe it to advantage, and to bring up two children, which her huſband had left her. By the protection of my brother one of them became a ſubaltern officer, and, at length, commander of a ſmall place; the eldeſt had the greater ſhare of his mother's affection, who, to introduce him into the world, made the laſt efforts to cloath him well: ſhe ſent him to the theatres, to the places ſet apart for the moſt diſtinguiſhed people, where he might make uſeful acquaintances. Moncrif, following his mother's counſels, became acquainted with me and my brother, amongſt others. This has been beneficial to him; our relations were in place; my brother made him his private friend and ſecretary, upon the moſt genteel footing: ſome years afterwards he attached himſelf to the Compte de Clermont, Prince of the blood, and he had the flattering title of ſecretary to his commanderies; he had even a liſt of vacant benefices depending upon this Prince-Abby; but he propoſed no ſubject but with the approbation of certain women

of

of the opera. He quarrelled with this little court; but my brother repaired all by making him reader to the queen, and ſecretary general of the poſts. It is ſaid he had learned to fence, and that he was even received as a fencing-maſter; what makes this probable is, that when Moncrif became reader to the queen, and conſequently at court, his age was enquired after: his friends wiſhed to prove him older than he appeared to be, and quoted the epocha of his reception in the corps of fencing-maſters. M. de Maurepas would aſſure himſelf of it; and, having had occaſion to read the liſt of the members of this community, who prayed a renewal of their privileges, he found, in fact, the name of Paradis at the head. He aſked the Syndics what was become of this maſter: the anſwer was, that he had diſappeared for ſome time, and conſequently renounced the profeſſion. The miniſter, who, as every body knows loves a little waggery, related this anecdote to the king. According to this account, Moncrif was eighty years of age. Lewis XV. having laughed at it a good deal, finding Moncrif one day with the queen, ſaid to him,

him, *Do you know, Moncrif, that there are people who give you eighty years of age? Yes, Sire*, anſwered he, *but I do not take them.* For my part, I do not believe that Moncrif has been a fencing-maſter; it muſt rather have been his brother, in whom his mother could not find other talents for ſociety than fencing, which is not a very ſocial one.

I return to Madame Paradis. With wit, reading, an agreeable manner, and addreſs, ſhe procured herſelf a good income. Towards the end of the reign of Lewis XIV. there was more pretenſion to wit in intrigues than at preſent: it was the cuſtom to write gallant notes, which required anſwers of the ſame kind, and the ardour of the cavalier was judged of by the energy of the letters which he got ſecretly delivered: the lover, in the ſame manner, calculated his hopes according to the anſwer. Madame Paradis devoted herſelf to the epiſtolary ſtyle; being known to ſeveral ladies of the gallant court of Lewis XIV. ſhe aſſiſted them with her pen to make agreeable advances, or give tender anſwers; and this was no real injury to

to her fortune, nor to the advancement of her ſon. Moncrif appeared to inherit the talent of his mother. My brother having made a journey into Touraine, became intimately and particularly acquainted with a lady of this province. After his return to Paris, he received from her ſome letters of gallantry, to which, in politeneſs, he could not but return anſwers. He charged Moncrif to write them, who acquitted himſelf like a worthy ſon of Madame Paradis, and ſpared my brother the trouble of even copying them. But the moſt whimſical conſequence of this correſpondence was, my brother having become miniſter, and the young lady a wife, ſhe had occaſion to write about ſome affair to her old lover, and was much ſurprized at not finding, in his anſwers, either the ſtyle of the letters ſhe had preſerved, or even the ſame handwriting: we may learn by this, that miniſters, and thoſe who are deſtined to become ſo, do not always do that of themſelves, from which they gain the moſt honour.

As

As I ſaid to Moncrif, there is nobody but is convinced of the neceſſity of pleaſing, and who has not, more or leſs, the deſire of doing it; but this is not all; talents are moreover neceſſary. Every actor upon a theatre carries with him the deſire of being applauded; yet there are many who come off with being hiſſed and hooted. To ſucceed, two kinds of talents are neceſſary; thoſe which nature gives, and cannot otherwiſe be acquired, ſtature, figure, and an agreeable voice; natural, eaſy, gay, and amiable wit; thoſe who poſſeſs not theſe advantages, ſhould procure to themſelves a fictitious amiability; though it is never worth that which is real, and what may properly be called innate: but ſtill it is of ſome value; it is ſtudied, but it muſt appear natural; is inſenſibly gained by habitude; and the occupation of improving acquired advantages becomes agreeable.

The deſire of excelling cannot be too much concealed; on the contrary, what ought to be moſt remarked, or ſuppoſed in you, is the deſire of making others appear to advantage. Affection, or at leaſt the appearance

pearance of it; admiration, real or pretended; flattery, delicately managed, never fail to ſucceed. When you perceive that any particular vice is diſpleaſing, affect the oppoſite virtue. This contraſt is the art of pleaſing in ſociety, what the *claro obſcuro* is in painting: the colouring muſt be heightened by contraſts; the colours muſt be laid on thick, and the pencils managed with delicacy. Good-nature, ſincerity, and complaiſance, muſt be affected, yet tinctured with a little criticiſm.

A ſatirical character is frightful and diſpleaſing in itſelf; but, as able phyſicians transform poiſons into remedies, men of great wit manage criticiſm and irony ſo as to amuſe ſome perſons, and correct others, without ſaying any thing offenſive; and what elſe is fable and good comedy?

Let us acknowledge that we ſtrive not to pleaſe others but from a motive of ſelf-love: but it is neceſſary to veil it ſo as to prevent its being even ſuſpected. Let us go ſtill further, and add, that we muſt not be too anxious about people whom we wiſh to pleaſe:

pleaſe: they are embarraſſed by being ſpoken well of in their preſence; they would often prefer being criticiſed, provided it did not exceed what they could defend with advantage.

Compliance is the laſt ſpring to put in motion, and which acts well in ſecret only: ſuch as are known to be of an accommodating character are ſuſpected; we are inclined to look upon them as deceitful, and even treacherous.

We eaſily perſuade thoſe who are in affliction, that we ourſelves are affected by it, becauſe whoever partakes of trouble cannot be ſuſpected of intereſted views; but nothing is more difficult than to perſuade thoſe who are happy, and arrive at great employs, that we rejoice ſincerely at their good fortune: they think, and with reaſon, that we ſhould trouble ourſelves but little about it, if our perſonal intereſt were not concerned therein. Men, in a ſubordinate ſituation, are not thanked for their complaiſance; it is looked upon as one of their obligations; it is even, ſometimes, by this

this they get their bread; but it is very valuable in ſuperiors, provided it be not ſuſpected to take its ſource from weakneſs or ſimplicity.

Indulgence for faults, which is founded upon indifference only, humiliates him who experiences it, and renders odious the perſon by whom it is exerciſed.

A diſdainful air, a contemptible tone, make great men hated; but a low and cringing manner, make them deſpiſed, which is ſtill worſe. A noble politeneſs is what they ought to be ambitious of, and which they often poſſeſs; but that which is equally rare and precious in all ranks is equability. Unhappily its oppoſite is not diſcovered till after a certain time of probation; we are frequently ſeduced into ſtrong connexions, before we diſcover that thoſe with whom we have formed them are unworthy of our eſteem, becauſe they have for ſometime impoſed upon themſelves the neceſſity of pleaſing; on the firſt neglect, their defects, and inſupportable humour appear; the beginning of the acquaintance was ſerene and agreeable; the end of it becomes clouded, and

ſometimes tempeſtuous; but when an engagement is formed, life paſſes in regretting the firſt moments; they return but ſeldom, and it is neceſſary to conſole ourſelves for an attachment to a perſon of a capricious and unequal character, by recollecting the agreeable moments we have paſſed together, and by enjoying the hope of finding others like them.

The reflection with which Moncrif finiſhes his book, appears to me to be the moſt ſenſible thing in it, and is as follows: "A "man, on entering the world, ſhould expect "to find two judges of all his actions,— "reaſon and ſelf-love, or the intereſt of "others. The firſt of theſe judges is always "equitable and impartial; the ſecond ſe"vere, and frequently unjuſt; it is the "child of jealouſy; let us ſtrive not to "allure it: this is the means of pleaſing "and ſucceeding."

I have related in a few pages, all the maxims worth quoting from Moncrif's book; *de la neceſſité et des moyens, de plaire*, in which there are three hundred.

ESSAY XXXVIII.

ON INDIFFERENCE EXEMPLIFIED IN THE CHARACTER OF FONTENELLE, MONTESQUIEU, AND HENAULT.

I HAVE often heard this bad maxim advanced, "that he who is not a great enemy, is not a good friend:" by which is undoubtedly meant, that he who is not capable of ſtrong hatred and vengeance, cannot be warm in the ſervice of his friends. But let us make a diſtinction between the exceſſes into which our paſſions may lead us, and the conſequences of a wiſe and deliberate attachment; friendſhip ought to be of the latter deſcription only; if it became a paſſion, it would loſe its reſpectability; and be attended with all the dangers of love, which is the cauſe of as many evils as hatred and vengeance. God preſerve us from too much love, as well as from too much hatred; but we ought to love to a certain degree: the heart of man has need of this ſentiment, and it is of uſe to our minds, when it does not obſcure them. But hatred and the love of vengeance

geance cannot do otherwiſe than torment us: happy are they who feel not theſe paſſions; cannot we on the principle of rational affection, ſerve our friends with alertneſs and conſtancy, and be even tenacious in affairs in which they are intereſted? Is it neceſſary to be cruel to one man, becauſe we are friendly to another? Does the malice of a perſecutor, and the unremitting affection of a friend, flow from the ſame complexion of mind? By no means; for my part, I declare myſelf a weak enemy, not only in force but in intention, although I am a zealous and ſteady friend.

VI.

If I have received ſome reproaches upon my pretended indifference for people with whom I live habitually, three of them deſerve many more, and I do not eſteem them leſs on this account—their names are well known in the world, ſince the firſt is M. de Fontenelle, the ſecond the Preſident de Monteſquieu, and the third, the Preſident Henault. The firſt is charged with and convicted of a kind of apathy, perhaps blameable with reſpect to others, but excellent for his own preſervation; being taken up

with himſelf only, and amiable enough to make others concerned for his welfare, he has by managing his weak and delicate conſtitution, always indulging his eaſe, puſhed his carreer to eighty years of age, with the pleaſing hope of ſeeing the whole revolution of the century. Each year gives him a new degree of merit, and adds to the intereſt his friends have in his exiſtence. They look upon him as one of thoſe maſter-pieces of art, carefully and delicately wrought, and preciouſly preſerved, becauſe it is impoſſible to make their equal. He makes us not only recollect the brilliant age of Lewis XIV. the end of which ſome of us ſaw, but alſo the wit of Buiſerade, Saint-Evremont, Scudery, and the tone of the hotel de Rambouillet, the air of which we may believe he has breathed upon the ſpot. He has this tone, but ſoftened, improved, and adapted to the preſent age, leſs obſcure and pedantic than that of the Beaux-Eſprits, which founded the academy; leſs finical than that of Julie d'Augennes, and his mother. His converſation is highly agreeable, mixed with ſentiments leſs refined than ſtriking, and with pleaſing anecdotes, without being ſatirical,

rical, becauſe they never relate but to literature or gallantry, and ſociety. All his tales are ſhort, and for this reaſon more ſtriking; they finiſh by ſomething witty, which is a neceſſary condition of ſuch narratives. The eulogiums which he pronounces at the Academy of Sciences, have in them the ſame ſpirit as his converſation; they are conſequently delightful; but I do not know if his manner of preſenting them be ſuch a one as he ought to make uſe of: he attaches himſelf to the perſons of Academicians, ſtrives to characteriſe, to paint them; even enters into details of their private life; and as he is an agreeable painter, his portraits are admired: but might not ſome of them be compared to fine engravings, found at the head of the works of certain heroes? they preſent us with their phyſiognomy, but leave us with a wiſh that they had done ſomething more.

It ſeems to me that the eulogium of an Academician, ſhould be the extract or crayon only of his academical works. It may be objected to this, that there are Academicians whoſe works and talents furniſh not

matter of great eulogium, but on one hand, even the barrenneſs or refuſal of eulogiums, is one means of preventing the Academy from admitting ſubjects incapable of doing it much honour: on the other, the protection which thoſe who are honorary Members only, have granted to the ſciences, the favours they have procured for the learned, may be advantageouſly ſpoken of in their behalf, and at leaſt their zeal applauded.—It muſt, however, be agreed, that Fontenelle in artfully paſſing over the dryneſs of matters to which thoſe who were the ſubjects of his encomium applied themſelves, ſays generally what is neceſſary. It is to be feared, his ſucceſſors and imitators will find it eaſieſt to ſpeak but little upon the ſubject, otherwiſe they will fail in it entirely.

To return to the perſonality of Fontenelle, we know he loves nothing to a great degree; but I pardon him his indifference, and love him better on account of it; we love him for himſelf only, without requiring a return or being flattered by it.—We may ſay of him what Madame de Deffant ſaid of her cat—"I love her exceedingly, becauſe ſhe

" is

" is the moſt amiable creature in the world;
" but I trouble myſelf little about the degree
" of affection ſhe has for me: I ſhould be
" very ſorry to loſe her, becauſe I feel that I
" manage and perpetuate my pleaſures, by
" employing my cares to prolong her exiſt-
" ence."

The Preſident de Monteſquieu is not ſo old as Fontenelle, but has full as much wit, although of quite another kind—it ſeems as if more ought to be expected in ſociety from the Preſident, becauſe he is more lively, even appears more active, more ſuſceptible of enthuſiaſm. At bottom, theſe two minds are tempered alike; Monteſquieu never makes himſelf uneaſy for any body, he has no ambition on his own account; he reads, travels and gathers knowledge; at length he writes, and ſolely for his pleaſure. Being a man of great ſenſe, he makes an agreeable uſe of what he knows, but there is more wit in his books than in his converſation, becauſe he is never anxious to ſhine in it. He has preſerved the Gaſcon accent, which he has from his country (Bourdeaux) and thinks it in ſome meaſure beneath him to ſtrive to

get rid of it. He is careleſs in his ſtyle, which is more ingenious and ſometimes more nervous than pure; there is no order nor method in his works, which are for this reaſon more brilliant than inſtructive. He had an early taſte for a kind of bold philoſophy, which he has combined with French gaiety and levity, and which has made his *Lettres Perſannes* truly a delightful work. But if on one hand, this book has been much admired, it has on the other, been juſtly complained of; there are paſſages which a man of wit may eaſily conceive, but ſuch as a prudent man ought never to let appear in print: theſe paſſages, have, notwithſtanding, eſtabliſhed the reputation of the book and the author. He would not have been of the Academy without this work, which ought to have excluded him from it. The Cardinal de Fleury, ſo prudent in other reſpects, ſhewed on this occaſion a puſillanimity which may be attended with great conſequences. The Preſident reſigned his employment, that his non-reſidence at Paris might not be an objection to his being received a Member of the Academy. His pretext was, that he was going to apply himſelf

ſelf to a great work upon the ſpirit of laws. The Preſident Henault, on quitting his employ, gave the ſame reaſon. Theſe gentlemen were rallied by their friends, who told them, "They quitted their profeſſions in order to learn it."

The fact is, Monteſquieu wiſhed to travel, to make philoſophical remarks upon men and nations, already known by his *Lettres Perſannes*: he was warmly received in Germany, England and Italy. We do not know the whole extent of the obſervations and reflections he made in different countries.—ſince his return, he has publiſhed but one work, printed in 1734, intituled, *Conſiderations ſur les cauſes de la grandeur et de la decadence des Romains*. In this work he appears more ſenſible, enlightened and reſerved than in his *Lettres Perſannes*, the matter keeps him from wandering. It is ſaid, he is preparing to publiſh his great work upon the ſpirit of laws: I know already ſome parts of it, which ſupported by the reputation of the author, cannot but augment its credit; but I fear the whole will not have this effect, and that there will be more agreeable chapters

ters to read, more ingenious and ſeducing ideas, than true and uſeful inſtructions upon the manner in which we ought to digeſt and underſtand the laws. It is, however, a book which has been, and ſtill is greatly wanted, although much has been written upon the ſubject.

We have good inſtitutes of the Roman civil laws; we have tolerabe ones in the French laws; but we have none publiſhed of general, or univerſal ones. We have no *Eſprit des Loix*, and I doubt much of our friend Monteſquieu's giving us one which will ſerve as a guide and compaſs to all the Legiſlators of the world. I know him to have all poſſible art; he has acquired vaſt knowledge in his travels, and in his retreats to the country; but I predict once more, that he will not give us the book we want, although there will be found, in what he is compoſing, many profound ideas, new thoughts, ſtriking images, ſallies of wit and genius, and an infinity of curious facts, whoſe application ſuppoſes ſtill more taſte than ſtudy.

I now

I now return to the character he bears in ſociety; great mildneſs and gaiety, a perfect equality, an air of ſimplicity and good nature, which, conſidering the reputation he has already acquired, is a peculiar merit. He is ſometimes abſent, and ſtrokes of *naiveté* eſcape him, which make him appear more amiable, as they form a contraſt with his acknowledged wit. I forgot to ſpeak of his little poem in proſe in the Grecian taſte, intitled *Le Temple de Gnide*. I know not if the reputation of the Preſident gained by his *Lettres Perſannes*, has not contributed to make this trifle eſteemed above its merit: it contains much wit, ſometimes grace and voluptuouſneſs, whoſe touches in ſome places are rather ſtrong, and there reigns a kind of philoſophical obſervation, which characteriſes the author, but it is different from thoſe of his other works.—Fontenelle certainly could not have written *les conſiderations ſur les Romains*; but *Le Temple de Gnide* would have been better conſtructed by him than by Monteſquieu.

I will not oppoſe the gallantry of the Preſident to that of Fontenelle, becauſe Monteſquieu

teſquieu had none: he writes little or no poetry, but he is found amiable in ſociety, independent of gallantry and poetry. Fontenelle has, on the contrary, need of theſe reſources; the gracefulneſs and manner in which he delivers that which from the mouth of any other man would be inſipid, make his ſcience and erudition appear to advantage, although they are perhaps not very profound.

The Preſident Henault, will not perhaps hold ſo diſtinguiſhed a place in the temple of memory as the two others, but I find he deſerves to be preferred to them both in ſociety: he is younger than Fontenelle, and leſs troubleſome, becauſe he requires leſs complaiſance and attention; he is on the contrary, very complaiſant himſelf, in the moſt ſimple, and at the ſame time elegant manner. This virtue ſeems to coſt him nothing; for which reaſon there are people unjuſt enough to believe him indiſcriminate and prodigal in the uſe of it; but thoſe who know him well and are near to him perceives that he knows how to diſtinguiſh; and that a ſound judgment and great knowledge

ledge preſide at the diſtribution. His character, eſpecially when he was young, appeared formed to ſucceed with women; he had wit, grace, delicacy and refinement—he cultivated ſucceſsfully muſic, poetry, and light literature; his muſic was not of a profound compoſition, but agreeable—his poetry was not ſublime; however, he undertook a tragedy; it is weak, but neither ridiculous nor tireſome. His other poetry is like that of Fontenelle, harmonious and witty: his proſe, eaſy and flowing; his eloquence is neither maſculine nor ſublime, although he gained premiums at the *Academie Francoiſe*, thirty years ago. It is never ſtrong or elevated, dull or inſipid: he was ſometime father of the oratory, and has contracted in that ſociety a taſte for ſtudy, and acquired ſome erudition; but this without the leaſt pedantry. I have been aſſured, that in a court of judicature, he was a good judge, without having a perfect knowledge of the laws, becauſe he has an upright mind and a ſound judgment. He never had magiſterial haughtineſs, nor the vulgarity of the limbs of the law. He does not pride himſelf upon his birth or illuſtrious titles: he

he is rich enough to be independent, and in this happy ſituation, uſing no pretenſions, he wiſely places himſelf below inſolence, and above meanneſs. There are women of ſufficient conſideration, who have overlooked his want of birth, even of perſonal advantages, and vigour. He has ever conducted himſelf on theſe occaſions with modeſty, never carrying his pretenſions too far; nothing was ever required of him which was improper he ſhould do,—at fifty years of age, he declared he would confine himſelf to a ſtudious and devout life; he made a general confeſſion of all his ſins, and it was on this occaſion he permitted himſelf the following pleaſantry, "we are never ſo rich as when we remove." His devotion is as free from fanaticiſm, perſecution, ſourneſs and intrigue, as his ſtudies are from pedantry.—He applys himſelf to compoſe an *Abrége Chronologique* of our hiſtory, which will have the merit of an exact chronology, well compoſed tables, and a ſummary of facts methodically arranged, and yet without being dry, ſterile, inſipid, or tireſome. We may not only ſeek and find therein every thing neceſſary to fix in our minds

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the principal epochas of our hiſtory; but we ſhall be able to read with pleaſure this abridgement, from beginning to end; the author having prepared for the reader reſting places, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, in the long route he has to get through. The moſt intereſting facts will be related with clearneſs and preciſion, and particular remarks will determine at each epocha, what were then our manners and principles: finally, this book, excellent in itſelf, will ſerve as a model, according to which many other good and uſeful books may be compoſed. There is reaſon to believe, that all the different hiſtories will ſoon be written in the ſame manner, and that this firſt work will be the baſis of a new and inſtructive kind. I agree, nevertheleſs, that the literary reputation of the Preſident Henault, will never equal that of Fontenelle or Monteſquieu; but I am of opinion, that his only work will be more uſeful than all theirs; becauſe it will open a new carreer to the progreſs of ſcience; whilſt the others will only produce bad imitations, who will go aſtray, in endeavouring to tread in their ſteps. But to reduce to a few words the character of

the Preſident Henault, he is accommodating without deceit; mild without inſipidity; officious without intereſt or ambition; complaiſant without meaneſs; a good friend, without enthuſiaſm or prejudice: in ſhort, he is as perfect a model in ſociety as his book is in its kind.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXXIX.

ON THE NATURAL TURN FOR SCANDAL AND RAILLERY.

THE love of ſcandal is ſo founded upon the malignity natural to moſt men, and eſpecially to women, that this vice will never be out of faſhion; the levity of our nation makes ſcandal more common in France than any where elſe. But at leaſt, we abhor calumny, we look upon it as a vice, the principles of which are the moſt culpable, and its conſequences may be the moſt pernicious, We are as fearful of becoming calumniators as murderers, and this with much reaſon. As for ſcandal, when it is well retailed, is a means of pleaſing in ſociety,—it animates converſation,—thoſe preſent are amuſed by ſpeaking ill of the abſent: one company is made to laugh at the follies of another. But this ſportiveneſs muſt be light, agreeable and ſatirical: let us leave to old and peeviſh devotees, the bad

habit of malignantly ſlandering their neighbours,—of reproaching young perſons with defects, which they compenſate by ſome good qualities, or with faults againſt which the aged cry ſo loudly, only becauſe they can no longer commit them.

To rally agreeably, it is neceſſary to have a graceful delivery; and this is no common talent. Light circumſtances are ſometimes added to the ſtory, to render it more poignant; but it muſt not be lengthened by them, nor the narration retarded. Mix your recitals with but few obſervations,—draw no concluſions from them, but leave your auditors to make ſuch malignant reflections as you will eaſily ſuggeſt to them; theſe will be ſo much the more approved of, as they will believe them to come from themſelves. I knew in my younger days, ſome excellent ſtory-tellers; they ſeem to be more rare at preſent; I think ſo perhaps, by anticipation, from the mania common to old people, of believing that every thing degenerates; but, however, this may be, I mean to form ſome day a liſt of the good ſtory-tellers of my time, and to characteriſe each of them by ſome one of their beſt ſtories,

ries, which I ſhall eaſily recollect. Madame Cornuel compared ſtories to thoſe *matelotes*, (rich ragouts, like turtle) of which it is ſaid, the "fiſh is eaten for the ſake of the ſauce;" in like manner ſaid ſhe, the beſt ſtories are beſt related. We have a proof of this in the famous tales of the Abby de Boiſrobert, at which the great Cardinal Richelieu laughed ſo much. Douville, brother to the Abby, has had them printed, and nothing is more inſipid on being read; but this is becauſe we have no longer the ſtory-teller to make us reliſh them, yet it was not he who wrote them.

The man whom in all France I have heard tell the beſt ſtory is the Duke of Maine, legitimated ſon of the late King; he was otherwiſe a weak Prince, and had but middling talents; his wife who prides herſelf upon being ſuperior to him, in point of underſtanding, does not tell a ſtory ſo well as he does; and their two ſons, the Prince of Dombes, and the Compte d'Eu, who in in other reſpects do not paſs for men of genius, poſſeſs their father's talent to a great degree.

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The age is certainly become more moderate in many reſpects; ſlander is not ſpread with malignity and ill humour; its conſequences are more feared; men are become circumſpect, leſt ſimple diſputes ſhould become ſerious affairs, which they wiſh to avoid. Perhaps, (let us ſecretly acknowledge it) we are become a little cowardly; but when we are unfortunate enough to be ſo, the true means of concealing it is to avoid diſputes, and to this end it is neceſſary to take timely precautions. After all, I like the preſent age better than I ſhould have done the preceding one; men were certainly brave and daring; but even the moſt prudent people were not in ſafety, becauſe they were beſet with thoſe who were quarrelſome. Society is at preſent more ſafe; we have ſcarcely any thing to fear but trifling diſputes or pleaſantries eaſy to be born with when we know how to reply to them. Formerly men devoured each other like lions and tygers; at preſent, we play with each other like little dogs, which gnaw, or young kittens, the ſtrokes of whoſe claws are not mortal.

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I like the raillery of men of wit, even though I ſhould be the ſubject of it, better than the circumſpection of fools: nothing can be more dull or ridiculous, than ſome of my acquaintance of this deſcription; their inſipidity makes one almoſt ſick; from inſipidity comes *ennui*; and *ennui* is the peſt of ſociety.

ESSAY XL.

THE COUNTENANCE AN INDICATION OF THE INTERIOR CHARACTER.

THE Countenance is a thing merely exterior, but, from which, there are certain conſequences to be drawn, to know the interior character and diſpoſitions of perſons. A firm and ſteady countenance ſuppoſes that a man preſerves a preſence and a compoſure of mind; on the contrary, an embarraſſed Countenance indicates confuſion, and a diſturbed mind. Therefore thoſe who are expert in gallantry, like ſkilful politicians, know how to take advantage of the appearance of the Countenance to forward their deſigns.

It would be equally impolite and awkward to diſcompoſe women in public; there are private opportunities when we ought to be leſs circumſpect. So the politician, in his private conferences, hazards blunt

blunt and unexpected propoſitions, obſerves the effects they produce upon him who was not prepared to receive them, according to which he puſhes his point, or retreats. A certain and general rule in ſociety is, that an amiable man never ſtrives to embarraſs any body, and takes ſuch meaſures as not to be embarraſſed himſelf; for nothing but embarraſſment makes men of ſenſe appear like fools.

As ſoon as a man is in place, or has acquired a fortune, he preſently acquires haughtineſs and airs of importance, which is eaſily believed to be the diſtinguiſhing mark and proof of ſuperiority. Nevertheleſs the more we are elevated, the more affable we ought to be, except on certain occaſions, wherein it is neceſſary to ſhew that we feel what we are, and to check thoſe who would otherwiſe forget it, and fail in what is due to us.

I have ſomewhere read, that we ought never to lay aſide an air of authority, ſo far as not to have it in our power to reſume it

when neceſſary; becauſe appearance is often neceſſary to evince reality.

Never make a great blow with a timid air, the effect would be loſt: but appear to pity thoſe whom you are obliged to puniſh; ſeem ſorry to refuſe thoſe whoſe demands you cannot comply with, and to be happy and ſatisfied at having it in your power to confer upon them ſome favour. I ſhall be anſwered that all this is ſoon ſaid, but very delicate and difficult of execution; I acknowledge it; but it is what a man in place muſt ſtudy to acquire. *Hic meta laborum.*

Great bablers and tale-bearers have ſeldom a firm Countenance, or, at leaſt, eaſily loſe it. Fools never have it; but half wits poſſeſs it ſometimes, and then it is a great merit in them, as it conceals a part of their folly. As a grave Countenance is generally accompanied with ſlowneſs in deliberation, this gives time to reflect upon what is to be ſaid or done; men of this deſcription make fewer miſtakes and fooliſh expreſſions.

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The Countenance of ſuperiors is never embarraſſing to people who have been well brought up; he has learned betimes the danger of being inſolent; but meanneſs is always contemptible. Moreover, as an honeſt man has nothing to reproach himſelf with, he is never embarraſſed in anſwering queſtions which are put to him; and, if he has to aſk in his turn, he gives his reaſons with that confidence which virtue and juſtice inſpire. It is equally neceſſary to be brief in the expoſition of our reaſons, in the narration of circumſtances and ſtories; in theſe we ought to preſs on to the point upon which they turn, abridge the preambles, and ſay no more than is neceſſary to lead to and diſcover it. The ſame in requiſitions, no more ſhould be ſaid than is abſolutely neceſſary to make known the deſired object, and the reaſons which may be deciſive and determinate, for the perſon to whom the requiſition is made, diveſting it alſo of every acceſſory, and changing the prologue into an overture.

It is more difficult for ſuperiors to conduct themſelves with their inferiors. To receive well a ſolicitation, they ought to know

know to whom they ſpeak, and be acquainted with the matter in queſtion, which is not always the caſe on the firſt approach: whilſt they are ignorant of the buſineſs, they ought to watch and attend; neither to diſcourage nor flatter with hopes, but to hearken, and, if it be neceſſary, to bring, by degrees, the ſolicitor to the point, always avoiding all appearance of unfavourable prepoſſeſſion: finally, to promiſe nothing but what they are ſure to perform, and to give no hopes but ſuch as are juſt and reaſonable. Moreover they ought to blend their politeneſs with that art which is not acquired but by a great knowledge of the world, and which cannot be learned in the duſt of the cabinet. Buſineſs is done by men, and with men; but, on the one hand, thoſe who have lived enough amongſt them to acquire the art of ſatisfying a numerous audience, have frequently led too diſſipated lives to have profoundly ſtudied the bottom of affairs with which they are charged; on the other, men who have grown pale over papers, have not been ſufficiently in the world. In both theſe caſes there are riſks, but rational people are well aware of them, and take their meaſures accordingly.

ESSAY

ESSAY XLI.

THE CHARACTER AND SUMMARY OF THE CURIOUS MANUSCRIPTS OF THE ABBE DE CHOISY.

IT has been long ſince obſerved that men of high birth are leſs inſolent than thoſe who arrive at eminence without that advantage; but what has not been ſo generally remarked is, that the greateſt princes are naturally timid; accuſtomed to think themſelves above all men, the leaſt idea of ſuperiority intimidates them; they ſeldom meet with men of higher rank than themſelves; but the reputation of wit, ſcience, knowledge of every kind, and even perſonal advantages, are, for them, ſo many objects of deference. They perceive themſelves inferior in certain reſpects, to ſome of their ſubjects and courtiers. I know princes, who would be more embarraſſed in converſing with an academician, than he would be in haranguing them publicly. The timi-

dity

dity of our princes is manifeſted by a ſilly look, by a ſtammering, and an embarraſſed countenance. It would be as uſeleſs as ill-timed, to give exan ples of them.

Converſation is the conſolation and reward of ſtudious and learned people; it refreſhes them after the buſineſs of the cabinet, and, perhaps, by uſing alternately, theſe two means, one becomes as profitable as the other. This is true with reſpect to youth, who may improve as much from the converſation of people who have ſeen a good deal, as from old books, full of great doctrine and variety of facts. But converſation alone is not ſufficient, becauſe it is generally too detached; as reading fatigues, becauſe books fix the attention too long on the ſame object. I know a religious order, (that of the Jeſuits) whoſe principles are ſo many problems, cenſured by ſome, admired by others, but, from among whom, many good authors have aſſuredly been produced. This ſociety admits, as far as it is poſſible, none but ſubjects of happy diſpoſitions; and, during the courſe of their ſtudies, the young fathers have a converſation

tion of four hours with the old ones, who have acquired moſt ſcience, experience, and knowledge of the world. Thus, with the Jeſuits, men become communicative, open and amiable, whilſt in the other orders, originally founded upon a recluſe, hermitic life, one part of the day paſſes in chaunting the praiſes of the Deity, and the other, in ſolitary ſtudy, meditating in retreat, and ſilently liſtening to maſters.

When we have contracted an early taſte for improvement from converſation, we are happy to be near old people who are capable of relating what they have ſeen and known the moſt intereſting: there is a manner of profiting by this, and of avoiding repetitions, to which they are but too ſubject. They muſt be examined upon things with which they are likely to be acquainted, and we may be aſſured they will relate them with pleaſure; they may be led from epoch to epoch, from object to object, on different days, and under different pretexts, not to fatigue them: we may be ſure of reading in their memory, as in a book, what it contains the moſt intereſting and curious. I acted

acted in this manner with my relation, the Abby de *Choisy*, with whom I afterwards lived during the last years of his life. He died in 1724, upwards of eighty years of age. I must agree, notwithstanding all the friendship he had for me, that he was not a man very estimable; his mind was weak, and was more distinguished for his social qualities than good conduct. He became a member of the academy, and gained some degree of reputation there, because he wrote and spoke well. Otherwise, he did not appear worthy to become a bishop, nor to be employed in any important affair: he always felt the effects of his effeminate education, and being no longer of an age to put on a woman's dress, he never was capable of thinking like a man. Notwithstanding all his defects, he was agreeable to listen to in his old age; his memory was stored with anecdotes of the court, which he had frequented; although he was never of any consequence there; and of the academy, in the midst of which he had lived for a long time. He had taste enough to judge of a sentiment or a witty expression; therefore, of the great number he had heard, some of

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the beſt remained in his memory; theſe he repeated frequently, and which I have retained: I found part of them written in the papers the Abby left me; for he put all his work into my hands a little before his death. I have ſelected what appeared to me the moſt intereſting, of which I have formed three great volumes; but not being able to refuſe the communication of them to a lady of the family, who was deſirous of reading them, ſhe kept them a long time, and gave them to the Abby D'Olivet, who took from the manuſcript a work in two little volumes, which he got printed in Holland, under the title of *Memoires pour ſervir à l'Hiſtoire de Lewis XIV. par feu M. l'Abbé de Choiſy, de l'Academie Francoiſe.* Theſe two volumes certainly contain, if the expreſſion may be permitted, the flower of my manuſcript. However, there ſtill remains ſome thoughts which I can mix with reflections upon the works of the author, who, on giving them into my poſſeſſion informed me upon what occaſion they were written.

There is only an abridgement in his Memoirs of what he more than once related to

me in detail. His mother was a woman of wit, but, in my opinion, very intriguing: ſhe was in the ſecret of the conſpiracy of Cinqmars, which terminated ſo unhappily for that young nobleman, his friend, and M. de Thou: that affair was founded on a real intrigue of ambitious and inconſiderate women. The Princeſs Marie of Gonzague, afterwards Queen of Poland, extravagantly in love with M. Cinqmars, who had already made a good fortune for a man of the family of a little Pariſian bourgeois, took it into her head, that the grand equery, in connecting himſelf with the enemies of the ſtate, might make the Cardinal de Richelieu, (already ill) tremble, and procure himſelf the conſtable's ſword. Certainly nobody, of the preſent age, would think of making themſelves uſeful by ſuch means, but they were thought adviſeable an hundred years ago. Madame de Choiſy was in the ſecret of this imprudent intrigue, and the Princeſs Marie of Gonzague had aſſured her that ſhe would make her huſband keeper of the ſeals; but the good man, M. de Choiſy, father of the abby, did not ſuſpect that his wife gave herſelf ſo much trouble about his fortune.

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He was intendant in Languedoc, and ordered to arreſt M. de Cinqmars, at Montpellier, and to ſeize all his papers. He found him employed in burning a great part of them, and, ſurely, thoſe which would have ſerved to convict him. M. de *Choiſy*, from pure goodneſs of heart, let him burn as many of them as he choſe. "You are right," ſaid the grand equerry to him, "in treating me with ſo much complaiſance; you would be very ſorry to find what I have juſt burned." In fact, they were letters from the Princeſs Maria, and, perhaps, from Madame de Choiſy, her confidant; the reſult of this was, that, although ſufficient proofs were found to condemn M. de Cinqmars, there were none which diſcovered the intrigue of the women.

The abby had often repeated to me what he ſlightly mentions in his Memoirs; that it was an effect of the policy of the Cardinal Mazarine, that MONSIEUR, brother to Lewis XIV. was brought up in the moſt effeminate manner, to render him puſillanimous and contemptible; at preſent, this would appear, to us, to the laſt degree ſtrange and ridiculous. Madame de Choiſy

gave into the extravagance, in conſequence of her turn for intrigue, and ſhe made her ſon adopt the ſame manner, to make her court to Monſieur. With reſpect to what regards this prince, we can only ſhrug up our ſhoulders, on ſeeing Cardinal Mazarine adopt ſuch pitiful means; they were, as uſeleſs in effect, as injudicious in the contrivance. Monſieur was not leſs brave in war, notwithſtanding his bad education, and, if he always found himſelf inferior to Lewis XIV. it was becauſe nature had not given him ſuch talents. On the contrary, every thing poſſible had been done to render Gaſton, brother to Lewis XIII. formidable, but he was never otherwiſe than a contemptible prince. The Abby de Choiſy preſerved, as long as he could, that impertinent habitude of dreſſing like a woman, and the follies he was guilty of, under that adjuſtment, are but too well known.

One of the Manuſcripts which he left me, contains his hiſtory, under the name of "The Counteſs of Barres," and, though not yet, I believe it will be printed; as the ſame perſon who has publiſhed the Memoirs of the Abby de Choiſy, has given copies of this

this trifle: it will be found not badly written, containing pleasurable details, not too modest, but very agreeable to read. The history will at the same time be thought improbable; I can, however, certify it to be a very true one. The old abby, a long time after he had written the life of David and Solomon, both edifying histories, and the history of the church, related to me again his follies, with an unspeakable pleasure, and I looked with astonishment at a man, whose life had been full of such strange improprieties.

One of the longest pieces of Manuscript stolen from me, is the Memoirs of the Life of Cardinal de Bouillon, the abby's intimate friend from their childhood to death: I will not repeat here what has been printed; but may justly conclude from it, that the Cardinal de Bouillon was a prelate of a middling capacity, who finished his career in the most despicable manner. He was exiled, and deprived of the revenues of his benefices, for attempting to make head against Lewis XIV. and his ministers. He recollected that his ancestors sold themselves dear; but they had something to dispose of, the prin-

cipality and ſtrong place of Sedan; they were well paid for theſe, in conſiderable lands and court honours; but they fell from independent princes, to rich, illuſtrious, and important courtiers. They could do nothing better than make their court to, and pleaſe Lewis XIV. or render great ſervices to the ſtate, like M. de Turenne, whoſe perſonal conſideration ſupported the Cardinal de Bouillon, as long as this uncle lived. After the death of M. de Turenne, the cardinal continued his improper conduct at court, and was, at length, a ſufferer by it.

In the piece concerning the Cardinal Bouillon, there are two articles which are quite foreign to it, but which characterize well enough two miniſters of Lewis XIV. one of whom is M. de Pomponne. The Abby pretends that Madame de Choiſy contributed to make him miniſter, becauſe ſhe found means to ſhew the king the letters which Monſ. de Pomponne wrote to her when he was ambaſſador in Sweden; it is added that the king admired them, and conceived a great opinion of their author. It is aſtoniſhing that Lewis XIV. was under the neceſſity of

of having recourſe to an ambaſſador's private letters to a woman, to judge of his capacity; but, without doubt, the king looked upon them to be more genuine, natural, and leſs ſtudied, than the diſpatches the ambaſſador addreſſed to him, or to the miniſter of foreign affairs. Madame de Choiſy was an old friend of M. de Pomponne, and to whom he ſeemed to open his heart, without diſcovering to her the ſecrets of ſtate: from thence Lewis XIV. concluded he would be a great miniſter; he was, however, no more than an honeſt and prudent man, of middling talents. Chance has put into my hands all his correſpondence, miniſterial and private, during the five years he was in Sweden, which I have preſerved in my library; I do not think it very brilliant, but ſenſible. He correſponded with M. de Lionne, who was far ſuperior to him in his manner of writing. Nothing can be more elegant than the anſwers of M. de Lionne to the Compte d'Eſtrades, ambaſſador in Holland, which were printed there, with the diſpatches of that ambaſſador. Men, deſtined to politics, ought to read this book, to form themſelves for negociations and public affairs. It diſcovers

with what art M. d'Eſtrades conducted the Dutch to the point to which he was inſtructed to conduct them; it was not, perhaps, always conformable to their intereſts; but, in that caſe, he made them ſwallow the golden pill ſent them by M. de Lionne. The miniſter and ambaſſador did not always explain clearly, in their diſpatches, what their real deſigns were; but they underſtood each other (to make uſe of a proverbial expreſſion) *like two pick-pockets in a fair.*

Another anecdote regiſtered in the memoirs of the Abby de Choiſy, concerns M. de Croiſſi. It is ſaid this miniſter was unjuſtly accuſed of being incapable of writing good diſpatches. One of his firſt clerks, of the name of Bergeret, took upon himſelf, with an affected modeſty, all the credit of them. The abby aſſures us that nothing was more falſe. This is neither the firſt nor the laſt time a like accident has happened to miniſters, whoſe modeſty and reſerve have given favourable opportunities to their ſubalterns. Simple and natural prepoſſeſſion attributes every thing to ſuperiors; cenſorious and malignant minds, all to ſubalterns. Reaſon and juſtice divides

between

between them the merit of what is well done; ſeconds have advantages enough, as they are not reſponſible for what is blameable and dangerous*.

The Abby de Choiſy had the Abbey of St. Seine, in Burgundy: it is not very conſiderable, ſince, at preſent, it does not exceed ſix thouſand livres a year. But he had moreover, the priory of St. Lo, in Normandy, which is a very beneficial one, and he was Dean of the cathedral of Bayeux, even before he was in orders. With all theſe he had an income of fourteen thouſand livres a year. He entered into holy orders on his voyage to Siam. It appears by the journal of this voyage that, on the 7th of December, 1685, he received the four leſſer orders; on the 8th he was ſub-deacon, on the 9th deacon, and on the 10th a prieſt,

* Bergeret had the impudence to ſolicit the place in the Academy Francoiſe, vacant by the death of M. de Cordemoi: he obtained it in 1675, and held it till the year 1684, when he died, without having ever compoſed any work, not even, as reported, his diſcourſe of admiſſion, which, however, is, in general, but a middling performance. He was replaced by the Abby de St. Pierre.

all of which he received from the hands of the Biſhop of Metellopolis, who made the voyage to Siam with him, on board the ſame veſſel; by means of which, he was, on leaving France, a tonſured clerk, and a prieſt when he arrived at Siam.

The ſecond Manuſcript I found in the papers of the Abby de Choiſy, is intituled, *Memoires de M. de Coſnac, d'abord Evêque de Valence, puis Archevêque d'Aix.* He was a man of much wit, ſaid many good things, and invented excellent ſtories. In his youth he buſied himſelf a good deal in the intrigues of two courts, that of the Prince de Conti, brother to the great Conde, and that of Monſieur, brother to Lewis XIV. he quitted them ſucceſſively, on account of ſome diſpute, whoſe origin and motives are well related in the Manuſcript which the Abby d'Olivet got almoſt reprinted, intituling it, *Livre ſeptieme des Memoires pour ſervir à l'Hiſtoire de Louis XIV.* The court of theſe two princes cannot be deſcribed with greater truth and naiveté than the Abby de Choiſy has done in this Manuſcript; wherein, occaſionally, are found, intereſting and agreeable anecdotes of the

court of Lewis XIV. : their authenticity may be relied upon ; for, although I was not fully aſſured of this, they carry ſuch an air of frankneſs and probability, as would alone prevent the leaſt doubt of it.

I have but two circumſtances to add to what has been printed by the care of the Abby d'Olivet : one of them concerns the ſuſpicions harboured upon the extraordinary circumſtances of the death of Madame Henriette, firſt wife of the Duke of Orleans. It is known that this princeſs was taken ill one evening in ſummer, at St. Cloud, after having drank cold liquors, preſented to her by an officer of her pantry, or her cup-bearer. Her death cauſed a general conſternation ; thoſe moſt affected by it, were the officers of the houſehold ; they were afraid, and not without reaſon, of loſing their offices, which, in the houſes of princeſſes, depend upon two lives, that of the princeſs, and of thoſe who hold them. Monſieur removed their fears, by promiſing them, that when he ſhould marry again, they ſhould hold the ſame places with the new Ducheſs of Orleans, as they had with the firſt. The poor creatures, waiting for this

this event, lived as well as they could without ſalary or maintenance from the Duke; and few of them had laid up anything: one, only, returned rich to Paris, where he bought a houſe, eſtabliſhed himſelf, and appeared contented with his fate. A few years afterwards, Monſieur, having married the Princeſs Palatine of Bavaria, ſince mother to the regent Duke of Orleans, who died in his regency, kept his word with all the dependents of the defunct, and preſented a liſt of them to Madame, ſaying that none of them were dead ſince the deceaſe of their firſt miſtreſs, nevertheleſs ſhe perceived but one place vacant; the princeſs aſked the reaſon—as for that man, anſwered Monſieur, he is very well, but, I believe he will never ſerve you; he was the firſt officer of the pantry, or the firſt cup-bearer. According to all appearance, Madame dared not examine further what this meant. I am ſure of this anecdote; I know people who have ſeen the old officer; they have told me his name*, which I have forgot; he never ſpoke firſt of the court of Monſieur nor of Madame; and, although he

* Morel. Vide Mſſ. de Colbert.

he lived at Paris, never went to the Palais Royal, to St. Cloud, or Verſailles; it is ſaid he was diſconcerted even when interrogated about his old miſtreſs. It was the Abby de Doſnac, who being very old and Archbiſhop of Aix, having learned that Saint Francis of Salles had juſt been canoniſed, exclaimed, "What, *M. de Geneve, my old friend?* I am delighted at his good fortune; he was a well-bred and agreeable, and even an honeſt man, although he cheated at piquet, at which we have often played together."

It will eaſily be believed the company laughed. "But, Monſeigneur," ſaid ſomebody, to him, "is it poſſible a ſaint ſhould cheat at play?" "Oh!" replied the archbiſhop, "he defended himſelf by ſaying that what he won was for the poor."

I found, moreover, in the papers of the Abby de Choiſy, two little romances, well written, and which have never been printed, but the ſtories are not very intereſting; one is of knight-errantry, the other in the Oriental manner; alſo the adventures of an Abby *de Saze*, who became converted by a miſtake

miſtake of the perſon; a director of the ſeminary, a man of great piety, wrote to an Abby de Saze, formerly a libertine, but afterwards a convert, that he would go and paſs ſhrove-tide with him, to employ in pious meditations that time which men of the world paſſed in profane diverſions. The ſimilarity of names cauſed a wrong-headed valet to give the letter to the Abby de Saze, whom he found providing for his carnival, not only vile amuſements, but even real parties of debauchery. The abby opened the letter, which was like a thunder-clap to him: in his firſt movement he became furious; in the ſecond, agitated and troubled; finally, in the laſt, he took a firm reſolution to become a convert. He went to confeſſion, which he had not done for many years before: the confeſſor after having reprimanded him, but giving him, at the ſame, time conſolation, encouraged him to ſay maſs, which he had not done for a long time, although he was a prieſt, and in poſſeſſion of great benefices: he ſaid it, and with ſo much compunction, that he expired at the end of the ſacrifice.

The

The Abby de Choiſy has left a little hiſtory of Madame de Guercheville; moſt of the anecdotes it contains are known. Every body knows this lady was very handſome; that Henry IV. was deeply in love with her; that ſhe refuſed his addreſſes; and, that the king conceived ſo high an eſteem for her, that he named her maid of honour to the queen, telling her, that if he had known a more virtuous woman in his kingdom he would have given her the preference: but the abby related to me, verbally, a circumſtance of this lady, which I do not remember to have met with any where elſe. Henry IV. knowing that Madame de Guercheville was at la Roche Guyon, reſolved to make her a viſit, and ſent a gentleman to inform her, that the chace having led him into that part of the country, he begged a ſupper and a bed in her caſtle. The lady anſwered reſpectfully, that ſhe would do every thing in her power to make the king's reception ſuch as it ought to be. The enchanted monarch arrived, and found, at the bottom of the ſtairs, Madame de Guercheville, full dreſſed, and preceded by all her ſervants; ſhe conducted him modeſtly to the moſt elegant chamber.

He

He ſaw, on paſſing by the kitchen-door, preparations for a great ſupper, and the lady announced to him, that as ſoon as he ſhould be repoſed, it ſhould be ſerved up effectively. The ſupper was ready as ſoon as he was prepared for it; but, upon the point of ſitting down to table he learned that Madame de Guercheville had ordered her coach, and was gone from the caſtle. Aſtoniſhed and mortified he ſent to her to know the reaſon of the ſtep ſhe had taken; her anſwer was, "A king ought to be the "maſter in every place he goes to, and I "am very glad to be free in thoſe I in-"habit."

The anecdotes of the Marquis D'Arquien, father of the queen of Poland, wife of Jean Sobieſki, collected by the Abby D'Olivet, are inſerted in the hiſtorical Memoirs of Lewis XIV. and form the eighth book.

I found, afterwards, in the abby's papers, a fragment which has not been publiſhed, undoubtedly becauſe thoſe who copied the others thought this badly arranged: it is ſo, in fact, but it does not, on that account, contain leſs intereſting ideas, and curious remarks.

remarks. It appears that in 1692, a little academy was formed at the Luxembourgh, whose object was to take up that which did not enter into the system of the three royal academies; the Academy Francoise, that of Sciences, and the Academy of Belles Lettres, which were already established; the first fifty years, and the two others twenty or thirty previous to it. Some people were of opinion that the law of nations, policy, jurisprudence, theology, and even moral philosophy, were not within the jurisdiction of these academies. It seems that it was to treat on these matters, and examine books of the same kind, that the new academy was established. The assemblies were to be held at the Abby de Choisy's at the Luxembourgh, once a week only, on the Tuesday, and was to be composed of no more than thirteen academicians, the master of the house included, who was to act as president. Nine of these thirteen are known in the literary world; the Abbies *Dangeau*, *De Choisy*, perpetual secretary, *Testu*, *Renaudot*, and *De Caumartin*, Messieurs *D'Herbelot*, *Perrault*, *Fontenelle*, and the *President Cousin*. The Abby de Choisy, Fontenelle, Perrault, the Abby Testu, and the

the Abby Renaudot, were already of the Academy Francoiſe, and the Preſident Couſin became a member of it afterwards; but D'Herbelot was of the Belles Lettres only. I have the journal of what paſſed in this private academy for the year 1692 only; perhaps it was of no longer duration. The academicians were bound to ſecrecy of what was ſaid among them, becauſe, as politics were to be diſcuſſed, reflections, improper to be divulged, might be made. The ſame ſecrecy was obſerved with reſpect to moral and philoſophical obſervations. Theſe precautions were very wiſe; and, it is very probable, that this attempt was unſucceſsful, ſolely on account of their not being obſerved.

Among the numerous obſervations contained in this journal, a few of them appeared to me worthy of attention. The Abby Renaudot maintained, at that time, that Varillas quoted in his manuſcripts, in the king's library, what never exiſted. Another academician ſaid, there were, in Clélie, and other modern romances, portraits which Varillas had wholly inſerted in his hiſtory;

hiſtory, that Varillas had not bluſhed at pilfering from Scudery.

Perrault read there his poem, on the Creation of the world; ſome paſſages were highly approved of, but others ſeverely criticiſed; the Abby ſaid there was too much imagination in a poem founded upon Geneſis; that it was not permitted to make Moſes a better natural philoſopher than he ought to appear according to his text, and that, above all, care ſhould have been taken not to have made him a diſciple of Deſcartes.

The Abby de Choiſy communicated to the aſſembly, the tranſlation of the Imitation of Jeſus Chriſt, which he had undertaken. He conſulted the members upon the title of this book, ſo much reſpected, which, according to his opinion, was not a proper one, for the book does not at all treat of the imitation of Chriſt, but of the interior conſolations which chriſtians may procure themſelves. Although it was agreed that the Abby was right, they repreſented to him the neceſſity of leaving the title as it had firſt appeared. One of them recol-

lected, that in the ſixteenth century a tranſlation of the imitation was publiſhed with the title of *L'Internelle Conſolation*, and that it had no ſucceſs, becauſe the book of imitation was not underſtood by it.

The Abby was prevented for the ſame reaſon from changing the titles of ſome chapters, whoſe matter did not correſpond with what they promiſed. Finally, they told him, that if he wiſhed to alter the tranſlations already known of the imitation, it was neceſſary to examine ſcrupulouſly the Latin text, compare the manuſcripts one with the other, eſtabliſh his authorities, &c. &c. The Abby anſwered his fellow Members, that all that would be *la mer a boire*—to drink the ſea dry: he took no farther notice of it, and arranged his tranſlation according to his fancy.

I cannot forbear relating a ſingular anecdote upon this tranſlation, by the Abby de Choiſy. He dedicated it to Madame de Maintenon, who was then a devotee, and declared miſtreſs to the King. To make his court to this Lady, the Abby put at the head of his book, an elegant engraving of Mad ame

Madame de Maintenon, kneeling at the foot of a crucifix, and at the bottom, were the following words from David, *Audi, filia, concupiſcet rex decorum tuum*—"Hearken, daughter, the King will deſire thy comlineſs." Every body was ſcandalized at this application: the Abby was ſoon obliged to take away the print from the remaining copies, having made preſents only of a few before hand. He would not even give me a copy with the print. The Bibliomanes bought it very dear.

In a diſſertation read by M. d'Herbelot, in the little Academy of the Luxembourg, upon the origin of the name of Pope, and the eſtabliſhed cuſtom in the Latin Church, of giving it to the Biſhop of Rome excluſively, I find, independently of what is generally known, that it was a great queſtion in 1630, under the Pontificate of Urban VIII. what title ſhould be given to the Cardinals: they were upon the point of being called *Perfectiſſimi* and *Your Perfection*; at length theſe paſſed into *Eminentiſſimi* and *Eminence*. It is remarkable, that Urban VIII. ordered them to be called ſo, under pain of excommunication. M. Camus, at that time, Biſhop of Belley, wrote and

preached devout romances, and introduced into theſe works ſome very ſingular things. M. M. les Cardineaus, had abandoned to the Biſhops, the title of *Illuſtriſſimi* and *Reverendiſſimi*, as they give to their valets their old purple cloaths and dirty linen.

The Abby Renaudot, read a diſſertation upon giants, in which there are very curious things; but I think, I have read moſt of them in ſome other work. I will only remark, that this diſſertation was ocaſioned by a letter the Preſident Couſin had inſerted in the *Journal des Savans*, of which he was then the author; the letter was from a Vicar of Laſſay, in the Dioceſe of Angers, who ſaid, he had found in his garden a ſepulchre, which contained a ſkeleton of ſeventeen feet two inches long: he offered to ſhew it to the curious.

It is known that the education of the great Conſtable Montmorency, had been ſo neglected as not be taught to read and write: yet he carried a book to maſs, but this was merely for the ſake of appearance. He ſigned patents and pancartes * in a very ſingular manner,

* Papers containing the duties on merchandize.

manner, upon the word of his Secretary, who laid them before him: he made twenty great ſcrawls one after another, after which, his Secretary ſtopped him, ſaying Monſeigneur there are enough. The company were ſhewn ſeveral ſignatures of this kind. This gave occaſion to ſome one preſent to relate an anecdote of a Biſhop of Angers, whoſe name I think, was Arnaud.—Becoming blind, he had an iron ſtamp made, upon which his name was engraved, (Nicolas); he made uſe of this to ſign diſmiſſions, letters, and other papers, to which his ſignature was neceſſary. It was alſo remarked, that this cuſtom was not rare among the Princes of Italy, and that the iron was called in Italian *cachetto:* it is known in Spain by the name of *Stampilla*; it ſerves for royal diſpatches; but it contains no proper name, for in Spain, every thing is ſigned and expedited with theſe words, *Yo el Rey—I the King*; and this formula always takes place, even when the diſpatches are for Italy or the Low Countries. It was added, that the uſe of the ſtamp might be attended with the greateſt danger, were it only becauſe it rendered the King's name leſs ſure and reſpectable; that it is true, this ſignature in France is moſtly

falſe; but at leaſt, that of the Secretaries is not ſo, that if the latter could ever be ſuſpected, the unhappy ſubjects would not know to whom to complain, when they received orders, upon whoſe execution their fortunes, and even lives depended.

The Abby de Dangeau advanced in one of theſe academical conferences, that in truth, Popes were the firſt and moſt accommodating people in the world. Pius IV. by a bull in 1564, granted to the Bohemians the communion of two kinds: his ſucceſſors have, at different times, canoniſed the uſurpations by ſecular princes, the lands and poſſeſſions of eccleſiaſtics; but at length, added he, they are aſked for ſo many, that it is impoſſible for them to conſent any longer. They have oppoſed the marriage of Prieſts and Biſhops; they could not do otherwiſe. If this were agreed to, every benefice with cure of ſouls, and others, would become hereditary; and the clergy with ſmall ſtipends, would bring diſgrace upon eccleſiaſtical dignities, and finally upon religion itſelf.

It appears that the academy at the Luxembourg finiſhed, becauſe queſtions too delicate

licate were propoſed in it, and the academicians, being divided, diſputed ſo warmly upon theſe objects, that they were exaſperated, and at laſt ſeparated.

I forgot to mention a remark I made in theſe memoirs, that the miniſters of ſtate, even the firſt of them, had not, by virtue of this title, a ſeat in parliament, and that they were never looked upon as great officers of the crown.

Charles VI. and Charles VII. were declared major in parliament without perſonally appearing there; the firſt was declared ſo by the Duke of Anjou, his uncle, and the ſecond by the ſimple fact.

The Abby de Choiſy left me a collection of *bosn mots*, in which there are many known to all the world, but others more rare, ſingular and agreeable: I will give a ſpecimen of them.

The Chevalier de la Ferti was young and inconſiderate; the king, who was kind to his relations, granted him five hundred crowns upon his caſſette, ſaying to him,

" Young man, I will encreaſe this ſum " every year in proportion as you ſhall be- " come more prudent." "Ah, Sire," replied the Chevalier, " your Majeſty does not " know to what you engage yourſelf, I ſhall " ruin you." Yet, notwithſtanding this gaſconade, the chevalier continued his extravagance. The following is a ridiculous one. He was at Lyons, in a merchant's houſe, where they played at Pharo; the bank was compoſed of Louis d'ors and crowns: he began to play upon his credit and favourable appearance, and riſked immediately a thouſand Louis, which he won; he riſked double, and loſt; he retired inſtantly, ſaying, " *Parblue, voila un coup im-* " *payable*;" which, in fact, he never paid.

M. Morlau, firſt phyſician to the Ducheſs of Burgundy, going one day, I know not for what purpoſe, to the prince's with a ſword, was jocoſe upon his adjuſtment, and ſaid, " Monſeigneur, do not you think I " reſemble Captain *Spezz a ferro*, of the Ita- " lian comedy? It is impoſſible to reſemble " him leſs," anſwered the prince, " *Spezz* " *a ferro* never killed any body."

The

The Marquis of Dangeau, well known to the Abby de Choiſy, and whom I have known myſelf, was at a famous courtier's, and one of the wits of the court of Lewis XIV. He was admitted into the *Academie Francoiſe* in 1668, and died in 1721. It was not till after the death of the king that he dared to acknowledge he was not only the confidant of that monarch, in his amours, during his youth, but that he aſſiſted him with his pen to write letters of gallantry to Madame de la Valliere. This good lady took infinite pains in anſwering them, and was, at length, obliged to get her themes corrected by this ſame Marquis of Dangeau. He took alſo upon himſelf to write poetry for the king; and, fearing leſt he ſhould make it too good, he did little honour to the monarch, who at length renounced both genuine and adoptive poetry. It is ſaid, that Monſieur and Madame having one day diſputed a queſtion of gallantry, they both applied to the Marquis, who ſecretly wrote for each of them, ſome verſes upon the ſubject, and that the king, to whom were they ſhewn, judged thoſe of Madame to be the beſt.

Every

Every body has heard of the Memoirs of the Marquis of Dangeau; they are a manuſcript journal of the court, from the year 1686 to 1720; I have read them all: it is true they are charged with much minutiæ; but there are alſo many intereſting anecdotes; if he did not write them day by day, he has, at leaſt, reviſed them carefully, and he would not have ſuffered any thing abſolutely falſe to eſcape him. We may ſay, that if they be not a true hiſtory of the court of France, for thirty-five years, they are good materials of which it may be compoſed.

The Abby de Dangeau, brother to the Marquis, and, like him, of the *Academie Francoiſe*, was the intimate friend of the Abby de Choiſy. Dying a little before him, he left him three or four great collections of remarks of every kind, which came to my hands with the papers of the Abby de Choiſy; and, in which, there are, certainly, excellent things; but, as the writing is extremely bad, I am afraid I ſhall never have the ſatisfaction of extracting from them the precious matter they may contain.

The Abby d'Aumont had taken a box at the comedy, and was waiting in it for the ladies of his company, when the Marſhal d'Albret arrived. From a motive of reſpect to this nobleman he was ſhewn into the box where the abby was, who found himſelf obliged to give way to the marſhal. The abby withdrew much diſpleaſed, and ſaid, grumblingly, between his teeth, "Look "at the brave marſhal, he has never taken "any thing in his life but my box."

Cromwell ſent his Excellency Lockart to France, with the title of ambaſſador, where he was received with all the honours due to his rank. One day the old Marſhal Villeroy, governor to Lewis XIV. aſking this Engliſhman why Cromwell, inſtead of taking the title of protector, had not got himſelf declared king. "Monſieur," replied Lockart, "we know the extent of "the prerogatives of a king, and limit "them accordingly, but we are ignorant "of thoſe of a protector." Lockart was right, new titles are neceſſary to new power.

At the time of the forced converſion of our ſouthern provinces, which have been called *dragonnades*, the Marſhal de Teſſé ſent a detachment of dragoons into a village, to force the inhabitants to converſion. The people, alarmed, wrote immediately to the Marſhal, and, to avoid the pillage with which they were threatened, informed him, their intentions were to abjure their errors. M. de Teſſé ordered the captain to return with his detachment; the latter, vexed to ſee ſo great a booty eſcape him, ſaid, on his arrival, to the general, "Monſeigneur, "thoſe raſcals laugh at you; they have "not given us the time even to inſtruct "them."

Gregory XIII. owed his elevation to the pontifical throne, principally, to the Cardinal Borromée, who had given him his vote, and procured him thoſe of his friends, becauſe he thought him a diſintereſted man. But, as ſoon as the pope was inſtalled, he began to enrich his family at the expence of St. Peter, which obliged the Cardinal Borromée to ſay to him, "Holy father, had "I known that, on being created pope, you "would have held ſuch a conduct, you "ſhould

" ſhould neither have had my voice, nor " thoſe of my friends.—Good," ſaid the pope, " did not the Holy Ghoſt know " it?"

The Abby de Boiſrobert being one morning with the Cardinal de Richelieu, ſaid ſeveral diſagreeable things of a magiſtrate of the firſt order, and attributed to him much ridicule; a little valet de chambre took it into his head to ſay to him, " Monſieur " l'Abby, take care of what you ſay; I give " you notice that I will inform M. *** " of it, to whom I am greatly attached, " becauſe he is my relation.—Friend," replied the Abby, " tell M. *** whatever " you pleaſe; on my part, I will inform " him of your pretenſions to be his relation, " and he will be more vexed with you than " with me."

The Queen, Chriſtina, paſſing by, I know not what city in France, was harangued by a conſul, who was a Calviniſt; he was eloquent, and ſhe hearkened to him with attention and pleaſure: " But, Sir," ſaid ſhe, to the conſul, " you have neither ſpoken " of my abdication nor of my converſion

" to

" to the catholic faith.—Madame," replied he, " I undertook to pronounce your eu-
" logium, and not to give your hiſtory."

Philip IV. having loſt the kingdom of Portugal, Catalonia, and ſome other provinces, took it into his head to take the ſurname of Great; the Duke of Medina-Celi ſaid, " our maſter is like a hole, which
" grows the bigger the more matter it
" loſes."

Madame B———. of a very diſtinguiſhed family in the magiſtracy, was witty, and perfectly underſtood the the art of pleaſantry; being in a very numerous company, ſomebody had the courage to ſay to her that her huſband appeared to be of a weak conſtitution; " Really," ſaid ſhe, " I have
" heard my mother-in-law ſay, that M. M.
" B——. have, for more than two hundred
" years that they were known in the world,
" been impotent from father to ſon: this
" lady has, however, brought forth a ſon,
" which is, at preſent, the laſt of the fa-
" mily."

Monſieur

Monſieur le Prince, ready to give battle, at Nerwinde, to the Imperialiſts, commanded by the General de Mercy, an excellent officer, perceived, after a rude cannonade, that the enemy made a falſe manœuvre: "Ah!" cried he, "*Mercy* is certainly killed." He fell upon the Germans and gained the victory. What he conjectured was true. It was upon the tomb of this general that the following honourable epitaph was engraved: *Siſte, viator, heroem calcas: Stop, traveller, thou treadeſt upon a hero.*

Monſieur le Prince was one day in his coach with a very tireſome fellow, who teazed him with ſtupifying ſtories—"Sir," ſaid he to him, "either do not put me to "ſleep, or let me ſleep on quietly."

The ſame Monſieur le Prince went frequently to the houſes of the miniſters of ſtate, and ſeemed to pay his court to them: "What do you want with thoſe people," ſaid the Count de Grammont to him; "do "you wiſh to become a prince of the "blood?"

M. de

M. de Turenne being prepared for a battle, charged the young Duke de Choiſeul, ſon of the Marechal Dupleſſis Praſlin, to take poſſeſſion of a poſt which he pointed out to him; but the young officer neglected to make ſure of it, thinking he had no oppoſition to fear: "Sir, Sir," ſaid the general to him, "I beg of you to follow my "directions; it was for want of ſuch a pre- "caution that I was beat at Rhetel by the "Marſhal your father."

The Abby de Choiſy pretended to the poſſeſſion of an anecdote upon the manner in which Meſſieurs de Cruſſel, d'Uzez, were made dukes and peers in 1572, the year of the affair of St. Bartholomew. Catherine of Medicis, wiſhed to gain over, or rather deceive the Admiral de Coligni; ſhe offered him the dignity of duke and peer: he refuſed it, that he might not render himſelf ſuſpected by the Huguenot party. But, as he was greatly in love with the Counteſs d'Uzez, he aſked the dukedom for her huſband, and obtained it. The new Duke d'Uzez was promoted and received, and a ſhort time afterwards the Admiral was maſſacred.

The

The ſecond volume left me by the Abby de Choiſy, contains the ſix firſt books of the work printed under the titleof *Memoires pour ſervir a l'Hiſtoire de Louis XIV.* but I have found at the end of the volume, a converſation between the abby and the Marquis de Canillac, upon the ſtate of the court in 1720, which the Abby d'Olivet dared not publiſh. The marquis was a man of great wit, favoured by the regent, who had made him a member of the council of the regency, and of that of foreign affairs: there are ſome good anecdotes in this converſation, a few of which I ſhall relate.

The Marquis de Canillac pretended that the regent was not naturally of a bad diſpoſition, but loved what was ſingular and extraordinary; that he was ſyſtematical, which made him adopt the ſyſtem of M. Law.

It is generally agreed, that if this ſyſtem had been well underſtood, and confined within proper bounds, it would have ſaved the kingdom: but it was carried much too far; M. Law himſelf had not underſtanding enough; he was, like the regent, ſingular

and ſyſtematical, but did not know how far to carry his ideas: when he was controller general he committed one fault upon another. He thought himſelf an adept, and, in fact, I have been aſſured by people of reputation, who knew him at Venice, that he poſſeſſed the never-failing means of winning at play whatever ſums of money he pleaſed. But it requires more art to enrich a ſtate than an individual. The regent ſaid one day to the Marquis de Canillac, that the bank, being in diſcredit, a new one was neceſſary, "You are miſtaken, Monſeigneur," anſwered the marquis; "you "once had one, but you have let it eſcape; "and never will be able to find it again."

I will add, that when the regent died, the people appeared ſo furious and deſperate, at the injury which the great number of illuſive bank-notes had done to many fortunes, that it was neceſſary to double the guard to conduct his body to Saint Denis; but when the Pariſians had felt a little the adminiſtration of Monſieur le Duc, and the brothers, at Paris, they agreed that the regent was to be regretted.

The

The third volume of manuſcripts of the Abby de Choiſy, contains the hiſtory of the pretended Counteſs of Barres. This ſcandalous book has not been entirely printed there are five books in my manuſcript, three of which only have been given to the public; but I will enter into no detail upon this work, which does no honour to my relation and old friend.

It will eaſily be ſuppoſed I have all the works the abby ever wrote, and that he made me a preſent of them upon a fine paper and on a good letter. I will give my ſentiments in a few words upon each, for they are very numerous.

The Abby de Choiſy did not begin to write till he had entirely quitted the ridiculous and ſingular life he had led; not even until ſome time afterwards. He returned to Paris, and, wearing the dreſs of his profeſſion, was like women who have been gallant and coquettiſh, and are become old; they have the choice of play, intrigue, wit and devotion. The Abby de Choiſy took up all of theſe, one after another. At firſt he played, and loſt the greateſt part of his

fortune; his benefices were all he had left. He poſſeſſed, among others, the abbey of Saint Seine, to which he retired, and became acquainted there with the famous Buſſy Rabutin, exiled to his eſtate in Burgundy, who adviſed him to leave off play and become an author. Buſſy perceived the abby had information and ſtyle ſufficient to compoſe books of devotion, written in an agreeable manner, which would be read by men of the world, to whom theſe kind of books are commonly tireſome. The abby benefited by this advice, but not until ſome years afterwards. In the mean time he came to Paris, and became very intimate with the Cardinal de Bouillon, who, in the moment of departure for Rome, where he was going to aſſiſt at the Conclave of 1676, propoſed to the abby to accompany him in quality of conclaviſt, to which he conſented. He has frequently related to me very intereſting details of this Conclave, and which prove that the Italian cardinals are great adepts in petty intrigues. The abby aſſured me that a ſevere illneſs which he had in 1683, made him reſolve to change his conduct, and that ſince that time his devotion had been ſincere. It was ſoon after

this

this illneſs that he compoſed, in concert with his friend, the Abby de Dangeau, his firſt work, which was printed in 1685. It conſiſts of four dialogues, upon the Immortality of the Soul; the Exiſtence of God; upon Providence; and, laſtly, upon Religion. I will ſay nothing about this book, which treats of ſuch ſerious matters: I avow, without reſerve, that it fatigued me, although well written. The year following, 1686, he was guilty of what may be called his laſt extravagance, his voyage to Siam. All the world know the journal he printed of it: ſome paſſages are dry, and others enlivened by ſtrokes of wit and agreeable details. In general, the epocha of the arrival of the Siameſe in France, and that of the French ambaſſadors at Siam, are capable of furniſhing many philoſophical reflections; it was a political comedy, ſuch as there were many in the reign of Lewis XIV. they appear ridiculous at preſent, but they contributed to the glory of the monarch, and that of the nation, inſeparable from each other. The Abby de Choiſy amuſed himſelf, for ſome time after his return, and entertained the court and city, with the recital of his great voyage: his

printed relation made the author fully known, and opened to him, in 1697, the doors of *l'Academie Francoiſe*. I have remarked, in the diſcourſe pronounced at his reception, two thoughts, the firſt of which appears to me ridiculous, and the ſecond a very fine and juſt one. He ſays that the new academicians ought to act like the cardinals, who remain ſome time with their mouths ſhut, till, in a conſiſtory, the Pope opens them with ceremony, that is to ſay, permits them to ſpeak. This is a proof that members were not then received into the academy as ſoon as they were elected. The other paſſage in the Abby's diſcourſe is, that there was, between Lewis XIV. and the academy, an intercourſe, which naturally led both to immortality. Lewis XIV. granted it his protection, and the academy augmented his glory.

To ſpeak ſucceſſively on what occaſions the Abby de Choiſy diſtinguiſhed himſelf as an academician, I muſt begin by obſerving that in 1704, *l'Academie Francoiſe*, wiſhing to confer an honour upon M. Boſſuet, which few others have received; the ſame day that the Abby, ſince Cardinal, de Polignac was

was received at the academy, in the place of the illuſtrious M. Boſſuet, Biſhop of Meaux, independently of the eulogium which his ſucceſſor, and the director made of him, the Abby de Choiſy was deſired to compoſe one of ſingular merit: this eulogium took up the remainder of the ſitting. The ſubject was fine, but I found nothing worthy of it in the Abby's diſcourſe.

The laſt year of his life, the Abby received the Abby d'Olivet; his diſcourſe was ſhort and ſimple; the good man was worn down, but he impoſed upon himſelf this taſk, becauſe the Abby d'Olivet was his friend. I know not if it be on this account he took from me his memoirs, and had them printed in Holland.

The following year, 1724, the Abby de Choiſy died; his ſucceſſor, M. Portal, firſt preſident, and M. de Valincourt, director, deſcribed him ſuch as he was in the latter part of his life, amiable in ſociety, eaſy in intercourſe, gentle in manners, poſſeſſed of natural grace, and an inſinuating lively turn, officious, a faithful friend, brilliant, and full of ſallies in converſation, although

he was modeſt, and appeared to forget himſelf in favour of others: his gaiety was mild and tranquil, of which he bore the character in his features. With reſpect to his merit, as his writings are of ſeveral kinds, he has been moſt approved of as an hiſtorian, and it is, in fact, in what he appears to the greateſt advantage. He publiſhed, in 1668, an interpretation of the Pſalms, wherein were pointed out the remarkable differences between the Hebrew text and the Vulgate; it was preceded by the life of David, in which he compared this monarch to Lewis XIV. The book had no ſucceſs; but the Life of David pleaſed, not only on account of its being well written, but, becauſe it was the faſhion of the times to praiſe Lewis XIV. it was therefore reprinted ſingly, and ſoon followed by the life of Solomon, written in the ſame ſtile of flattery, and, which was ſtill more admired, eſpecially the paſſage wherein he repreſents Solomon giving audience to the ambaſſadors of the Indian king.

Des penſées Chrétiennes, which he publiſhed in 1690, had little ſucceſs; it did not, however, prevent his giving, in 1692, a tranſlation

lation of the Imitation of Jeſus Chriſt, of which I have already ſpoken. Diſcouraged by the criticiſms on this work, he confined himſelf to writing hiſtory, in which, in my opinion, he ſucceeded perfectly; for, if his ſtyle does not always appear noble enough for the ſubject of which he treats, it is, at leaſt agreeable and pure, and is read with ſatisfaction. The books of the Abby de Choiſy, which I adviſe my friends to read, and eſpecially the ladies with whom I am acquainted, are, two or three volumes *D'Hiſtoires de Piété et de Morale*, which he acknowledges to have written in oppoſition to the *Petits Contes de Fées*, greatly in vogue towards the end of the laſt century. Great courage is neceſſary thus to oppoſe hiſtory to fable, ſo delightful to the imagination of women, and, perhaps of men alſo. Yet it muſt be acknowledged, that the Abby did his beſt, and transferred the ſtyles of Madame de la Fayette, and Madame d'Aunoy, into moral and edifying ſtories. There are twenty-one in number, and, if they be not all really excellent, they are delightful to read, and not difficult to procure.

Their

Their ſucceſs encouraged the Abby to give, in 1695, *Les Vies de Philippe de Valois, du Roi Jean, de Charles V. de Charles VI.* and, finally, that of Saint Lewis. They were much approved of at Court, and put into the hands of the royal children, as infinitely proper to give them inſtruction. Effectively, nothing is more inſtructive than hiſtory, written with uſeful views, with good ſenſe, and mixed with moral reflections, given in a few words, and riſing naturally from facts.

The Abby is not curious in inveſtigating ſingular and extraordinary diſcoveries, as producing no utility, nor even exciting admiration; they are ſcarce known at preſent, perhaps, becauſe they were neglected; and from which no rules of conduct can be preſcribed, no concluſions drawn, to know the human heart, nor even the manners of the early ages; becauſe they are, for the moſt part, extraordinary and iſolated circumſtances; and, that the knowledge of the manners of a nation can only reſult from an union of a great number of facts.

At

At length the Abby undertook his hiſtory of the Church, although thoſe of M. de Tillemont, and the Abby de Fleury, were already begun; but theſe three authors could ſcarcely agree. M. de Tillemont overcharged this work with an erudition which, on one hand made it valuable, but on the other, not proper for the common claſs of readers; moreover he has treated of the ſix firſt ages of the church. That of the Abby de Fleury began to appear in 1691, but it was eaſy to diſcover that, although excellent, and a work of a moſt ſenſible and methodical author, it took ſuch a turn as to prevent its being finiſhed in a reaſonable time. That of the Abby de Choiſy was, on the contrary, ſo abridged, as to give hopes of its being ſoon terminated; and, in effect, although he was ſixty when the firſt volume appeared, in 1703, the laſt volume was publiſhed in 1723, and the hiſtory brought down to 1715. This work is by no means overcharged with erudition: on the contrary the author has been too deficient in that reſpect, accuſed of quoting no authorities, and of having, under pretence of giving the hiſtory of the Church, written

that

that of the Chriſtian world, from the birth of Jeſus Chriſt.

But he wiſhed his hiſtory to be within the capacity of every body, and he has certainly fulfilled his object; he has drawn all his information from the beſt ſources, becauſe the facts he has given are generally known. It was not poſſible for him to inform his readers of the progreſs of religion, and of the conteſts it was the cauſe of, without giving the hiſtory of the whole Chriſtian world. He has not entered into a detail of controverſies, becauſe this would certainly have been fatiguing; but he has never failed to explain, very clearly, in what hereſies conſiſted; from whence they ſprung; what great events they have produced, and when they were terminated. The Abby had very delicate points to treat of; ſuch as the cruſades, the councils of Conſtance and Bale, and the religious wars in France; all which he got over with much wiſdom and addreſs. All his idle obſervations are confined to the laſt volume: but, on the other hand, he has uſed much art in ſpeaking of Janſeniſm. This volume contains his voyage to Siam. In fact, the Hiſtory of the Church,

Church, by the Abby de Choiſy, is ſufficiently good, very agreeable, and, perhaps, the beſt for women to read. I have recommended the peruſal of it to moſt of the ladies of my acquaintance, for which they have thanked me, as well as for that of the Lives of the Five Kings of France of which I have ſpoken. The Abby wrote alſo, in 1706, the Life of Madame de Miramion: this lady was his couſin-german, which was a good reaſon for his writing her life, but not equally ſo for its being read by the public.

ESSAY

ESSAY XLIV.

ON THE ERUDITION, FINE TASTE, AND ELEGANCE OF CARDINAL POLIGNAC.

I SEE, ſometimes the Cardinal de Polignac, and he always inſpires me with the ſame ſentiments of admiration, and reſpect. He appears to me to be the laſt great prelate of the Gallic church, who profeſſes eloquence in the Latin as well the French language, and whoſe erudition is very extenſive. He, alone, among the honorary members of the Academy of Belles Lettres, underſtands and ſpeaks the language of the learned of which this academy is compoſed; he expreſſes himſelf upon matters of erudition, with a grace and dignity proper and peculiar to himſelf. It may be remembered that M. Boſſuet, whom the Cardinal, at that time Abby de Polignac, replaced in 1704, at the Academy Francoiſe, was the laſt prelate who had a diſtinguiſhed rank among the theologians and polemical writers: The converſation of the Cardinal is equally brilliant

and inſtructive: he knows ſomething of every ſubject, and relates with grace and perſpicuity every thing he knows: he ſpeaks upon the ſciences, and upon matters of erudition, as Fontenelle wrote his worlds, in reducing the moſt abſtracted matters to the capacity of the vulgar; and renders them in terms which men of education and refinement uſe in treating familiar ſubjects of ordinary converſation.

Nobody relates more elegantly than the Cardinal, and without entreaty; but, in the moſt ſimple narratives, wherein erudition would be inſipid from the mouth of another, it finds graces in his, from the aid of his perſon and elegant pronunciation. Age has deprived him of ſome of theſe advantages, but he preſerves ſtill, enough of them, eſpecially when we call to mind the many great occaſions in which his graces and natural talents have ſhone. My uncle, the Biſhop of Blois, who was nearly his cotemporary, has frequently ſpoken to me of his younger days. Never was a courſe of ſtudy made with more reputation than his: not only his themes and compoſitions were excellent, but he had time and facility to

aſſiſt

aſſiſt his fellow-ſtudents, or, rather, to do their duty for them; ſo much ſo, that the four pieces which gained the two premiums and the *acceſſits*, in the college of Harcourt, where he ſtudied, were all compoſed by him. When he was engaged in philoſophy, at the ſame college, he would maintain, in his public theſes, the ſyſtem of Deſcartes, which it was then found difficult to eſtabliſh: he acquitted himſelf with great reputation, and confounded all the partiſans of old opinions. Nevertheleſs, the ancient doctors of the univerſity having taken it ill that he ſhould have combated Ariſtotle, and not having been willing to give a degree to the enemy of the preceptor of Alexander, he conſented to maintain another theſis, in which be read his recantation, and made Ariſtotle triumph over the Carteſians themſelves.

No ſooner was he received doctor in theology, than the Cardinal de Bouillon took him to Rome, to the conclave of 1689, wherein the Pope, Alexander VIII. was elected. As ſoon as the Abby *de Polignac* was known in this capital of the Chriſtian world, which was then the centre of the moſt profound

found erudition and refined policy, he was generally loved and eſteemed. The French cardinals and ambaſſador judged him the moſt proper perſon to make the Pope hearken to reaſon upon the articles of the famous aſſembly of the clergy of France in 1682. It was difficult to perſuade the court of Rome to ſwallow this pill; yet the wit and eloquence of the Abby *de Polignac* brought it about: he was charged to carry the news of it to France, and had, on this occaſion, a private audience of Lewis XIV. who ſaid of him, in French, what the Pope, Alexander VIII. had ſaid in Italian: *This young man has the art of perſuading you to believe every thing he pleaſes; whilſt he appears at firſt to be of your opinion he is artfully maintaining a contrary one, but he gains his end with ſo much addreſs, that he finiſhes always by convincing you he is right.* He had not yet put the finiſhing ſtroke to this great affair before the Pope recalled him to Rome. He aſſiſted again at the conclave wherein Innocent XII. was elected, and he returned to France the following year, 1692.

About two years afterwards the king named him ambaſſador to Poland, a very

delicate appointment, from the particular circumſtances at that period. John Sobieſki was in a very declining ſtate of health; Lewis XIV. wiſhed not only to preſerve ſome credit in Poland, but to give, for a ſucceſſor to the declining king, a prince devoted to France. The Prince of Conti had offered himſelf, and Lewis XIV. charged ſecretly the Abby *de Polignac* to endeavour to get him elected, notwithſtanding the oppoſition to the Queen Dowager, who was a French woman, but who, with much reaſon, favoured her children, in ſpite of all contrary cabals. The Abby, keeping his inſtructions very ſecret, arrived at the court of Sobieſki a year before his death; he delighted all the Polanders by the facility with which he ſpoke Latin; he might have been taken for an envoy from the court of Auguſtus, if he had not been heard to ſpeak French to the Queen, who was ſeduced by his wit and appearance; but ſhe could not abandon, on his account, the intereſt of her family. Sobieſki died, and the general diet aſſembled to chuſe a ſucceſſor. The eloquence of the Abby *de Polignac*, the promiſes and hopes with which he allured the Polanders were, at firſt, attended with ſo much ſucceſs, that a great

a great part of the nation, headed by the primate, proclaimed the Prince of Conti; but in the ſame moment, the ſums which the Elector of Saxony had diſtributed, cauſed a double election, in which this German prince was choſen. Both pretending to the crown, they both arrived to ſupport their party, and continued to employ the means which had, at firſt, been ſucceſsful; but thoſe of the Elector were more effectual and ſolid. He had money and even troops; the Prince of Conti, on the contrary, after having received kingly honours at the court of France, went on board a French veſſel at Dantzick, where he ſtayed ſix weeks, but without any other means of proving the legality of his election, than the good face and eloquence of the Abby *de Polignac*. Theſe reſources were ſoon exhauſted; the Prince of Conti, and even the Abby, were obliged to return to France.

Although the court of France was too juſt and well informed not to perceive that it was not the fault of the ambaſſador if his miſſion was not crowned with a more brilliant ſucceſs, he was, notwithſtanding, exiled from Verſailles for four years. He em-

ployed this time uſefully, to encreaſe his maſs of knowledge, which was already very great. Finally, in 1702, he was ſent to Rome in quality of Auditor of the Rota*. He now found new opportunities of diſtinguiſhing himſelf, and gaining admiration, for which he was recompenſed by a nomination to the Cardinalſhip, by James, King of England.

He was upon the point of enjoying the honours of his new rank, when he was recalled to France on account of ſome very critical circumſtances. He was obliged, in 1710, to go with the Marſhal d'Huxelles to Gertrudenberg, charged by Lewis XIV. to propoſe to the enemies of this monarch, his ſubmiſſion

* The name of an eccleſiaſtical court at Rome, compoſed of twelve prelates, one of whom muſt be a German, another a Frenchman, and two of them Spaniards; the other eight are Italians, three of whom muſt be Romans, and the remaining five, a Bologneſe, a Ferraran, a Milaneſe, a Venetian, and a Tuſcan.

This is one of the moſt auguſt tribunals in Rome, and takes cognizance, by appeal, of all ſuits in the territory of the church; as alſo, of all matters beneficiary and patrimonial.

TRANSLATOR.

ſubmiſſion to the moſt humiliating conditions, in order to terminate the war. Unhappily all the wit and eloquence of the future cardinal was there ineffectual. At length, after two years were elapſed, he was named plenipotentiary to the famous congreſs of Utrecht; it muſt be remarked that he was at that time named, at Rome, cardinal *in petto*, and, though all the people knew who he was, he did not appear as an eccleſiaſtic, either in dreſs or title: his dreſs was ſecular, and he was called the *Compte de Polignac*. It was in this ſituation of an *incognito*, that he was preſent at all the negotiations of Utrecht, to the moment of ſigning the treaty; he then declared it was not poſſible for him to ſign the excluſion of a monarch from his throne, to whom he was indebted for the cardinal's hat; he withdrew, and came to enjoy, at the court of France, the honours of the cardinalſhip.

The new political ſyſtem which was adopted, after the death of Lewis XIV. exiled him to his Abby of Anchin, in Flanders. Theſe good Flemiſh monks trembled to ſee him arrive in their monaſtery; but they were afflicted even to deſpair when he left them,

after the death of the Cardinal Dubois and of the Regent. They were not capable of appreciating his wit, nor of underſtanding his erudition; but they had found him mild and amiable, and ſo far from plundering them, he embelliſhed their church, and re-eſtabliſhed their houſe.

He was obliged to return to Rome at the death of Clement XI. and he aſſiſted at the conclaves wherein Innocent XIII. Benoit XIII. and Clement XII. were elected. During the two firſt pontificates he was charged with the affairs of France at that court. This city was ever the fineſt theatre of his glory: one would have thought its ancient grandeur entered with him into the capital. On his part, when he returned, he appeared charged with the ſpoils of Rome, ſubdued by his wit and eloquence; and it may literally be ſaid, that, in his laſt journey, he tranſported a part of ancient Rome to Paris, by placing in his hotel a collection of antique ſtatues and monuments taken from the palaces of the firſt emperors.

I cannot ſee the Cardinal de *Polignac* without recollecting all he has done and learned

for

for ſixty years paſt; I remain, as it were, in ecſtaſy, when near him, and in the greateſt admiration of every thing he ſays. It is obſerved that his manner is become old as well as his perſon; it is true that his tone has outlived the mode. But is it not becauſe we have abſolutely loſt the habitude of hearing the language of ſcience and erudition, that the Cardinal begins to be tireſome to us? for, otherwiſe, nobody treats theſe matters with leſs pedantry than he does: if he quotes, it is always *a-propos*, becauſe, having a prodigious memory, it furniſhes him with what is neceſſary to ſupport converſation in every point, let the ſubject be what it may. For my part, who have finiſhed my ſtudies, but who have yet a great deal to learn, I declare I never received more agreeable leſſons than thoſe he gives in converſation.

Being a good deal taken up about the Cardinal, I have juſt read his diſcourſe of admiſſion at the *Academy Francoiſe*, in 1704. Nothing can be more elegant and noble; and this immenſe collection, begun almoſt an hundred years ago, contains no diſcourſe equal to his: it is the moſt perfect model

for thoſe who have a like taſk to fulfil, obſerving always that the academician, whom they ſucceed, and the circumſtances in which this kingdom is, at the time they ſpeak, may infinitely increaſe the difficulties of it. The Abby de *Polignac* had difficulties to encounter, but he got over them in ſuch a manner as gained him univerſal applauſe; and, had it been cuſtomary at that time, the academy would have rung with their plaudits.

The Cardinal has a pupil and friend, thirty years younger than himſelf, who, conſequently, cannot be reproached with having manners different from the faſhion: this is the Abby de Rothelin. He has a good deal of wit, a ſtrong memory, and much knowledge, but not ſo extenſive as that of the Cardinal; he ſpent with him ſeveral years at Rome, and has been twice his conclaviſt. There he ſaw what honour erudition conferred on the Cardinal; he endeavoured to tread in his ſteps, and is become, like him, a member of the *Academy Francoiſe*, and honorary of that, *des Inſcriptions* and *des Belles Lettres*. But his eloquence is neither ſo natural or noble, as that of

of his maſter. He has more vivacity in converſation, which ſparkles with more ſtrokes of wit; he has, perhaps, received more from nature than the Cardinal, but he does not know how to employ ſo well what was acquired from others, nor to reap the fruit of his ſtudies.

The Cardinal has undertaken a Latin poem, which he intitules *Anti-Lucretius*, and is a refutation of the ſyſtem of materialiſts. He recites paſſages from it to perſons whom he thinks capable of judging of their merit; and his Eminence has done me the honour to repeat ſeveral of them.

They are admirable paintings and deſcriptions. If one knows the Latin ever ſo little, and remembers the authors of the Auguſtan age, he would imagine that he read them over again by hearing theſe paſſages. But a poem againſt Lucretius, of equal length with the original, and divided into nine books, requires the life of a man to carry it to perfection. The Cardinal began too late, and cannot flatter himſelf with the hope of living to finiſh it. It is ſaid he means to charge the Abby de Rothelin with this taſk, who

who, from vanity, will not refuſe it, and will think it an honour to put the work of his reſpectable friend in a ſtate to appear before the public. But, to this end, the aid of ſome able profeſſor of the univerſity will be neceſſary; the Abby will never accompliſh it of himſelf. Moreover, when the Anti-Lucretius appears, it will undoubtedly do honour to the Cardinal's abilities, as well as the Abby's, and even thoſe perſons who ſhall have aſſiſted him in finiſhing it. But who, at preſent, will read a latin poem, entirely philoſophical, of five or ſix thouſand lines? Scarcely would a tranſlation of it, in proſe or verſe, be turned over. Greek is entirely forgotten; it is to be feared the Latin will ſoon be ſo, and that the Cardinal de *Polignac*, the Abby de Rothelin, and a certain M. le Beau, coming up in the univerſity, will be called *the laſt of the Romans*. Even the Jeſuits begin to neglect Latin; they find it more eaſy to write in French; this gains them more honour and profit.

The figure of the Cardinal and that of the Abby are ſtill more different than their turn of mind. That of the firſt is elegant and

and noble, and announces what he is, and has been. If we were to paint from idea a great prelate, a learned cardinal, a wise and worthy ambassador, a famous Roman orator, we should seize the features of the Cardinal de *Polignac*. The Abby de Rothelin has, on the contrary, a fine and sensible countenance, but appears to have delicate lungs; his figure is agreeable, but quite modern; that of the Cardinal is, at present, a beautiful and precious antique.

ESSAY XLIII.

ON ABBY ROTHELIN's EXTRAVAGANT TASTE FOR MEDALS AND BOOKS.

THE Abby *de Rothelin*'s curioſity is of two kinds, which belong equally to erudition, medals and books. He has, of the firſt, a conſiderable collection of all ſorts and forms. His ſilver medals are, as I have been told, eight thouſand in number, to which muſt be added, three hundred medallions of emperors, and four hundred of Grecian cities. His ſeries of large and ſmaller medals, in bronze, are upwards of nine thouſand. He began this collection at Rome, under the inſpection of the Cardinal de Polignac. His eminence having, on his part, collected ſome, the Abby hopes he will leave them to him, and that, by this means, his cabinet will become the fineſt and moſt precious ever in the poſſeſſion of an individual in France. The Abby will not be at all inſenſible of the poſſeſſion of ſo rich a literary domain; for, although a man of

of quality, ſufficiently wealthy, amiable, and a good companion, he is accuſed of loving medals to ſuch a degree, that when he finds one careleſsly laid, and is unobſerved by the proprietor, he does not heſitate to put it in his pocket, and, afterwards place it in his cabinet: except in this he is by no means knaviſh. He is rather too poignant and indiſcriminate in raillery: the cardinal's diſpoſition was equally remote from ſatire or ſcandal.

The Abby *de Rothelin*'s other taſte, is in books. His literary collection begins to be very conſiderable; he ſhews it willingly, and with oſtentation, and makes curious remarks on ſome printed works which he alone poſſeſſes: he explains in what their merit conſiſts; the rarity and ſingularity by which they are diſtinguiſhed. As he commonly ſpeaks to people leſs learned than himſelf, they believe all he ſays, and congratulate him upon the poſſeſſion of ſuch a precious treaſure, which will be ſold for a great price after his death. Senſible people think there is a little quackery in this, and I am of the ſame opinion.

In

In a taſte for books we muſt diſtinguiſh maſter-pieces in compoſition, the moſt ſplendid editions, and elegance of types. Their merit is viſible, and we cannot refuſe them a place in a rich library, eſpecially when we are aſſured that the editions are as correct as they are handſome.

It may therefore be conceived that the firſt books printed in any language are ſought after like ſo many hiſtorical monuments of the arts and printing; but it ſeems to me that otherwiſe the value of a library ſhould conſiſt in the intrinſic merit of the books, and in the utility they may be of to thoſe who poſſeſs them. People who are, or wiſh to become well-informed, ought to have a great number of books of every kind; thoſe of leſs pretenſions, ought to confine themſelves to books proper to their ſituation, and ſuch as are uſeful to their daily amuſement and inſtruction. To wiſh to go further is folly and abuſe; yet I think this folly ſeems pretty general. The Abby *de Rothelin* inſpired with it the Compte de Hoym, miniſter of the king of Poland, Elector of Saxony, at the court of France, and who has been perſuaded that, although

unlearned, he ought to have the ſcarceſt books of every kind, and to get them magnificently bound. M. de Boze, perpetual ſecretary to the Academy *des Belles Lettres*, has alſo begun to collect books of erudition; he has had, and will continue to have, the power of perſuading the illiterate rich to make the ſame acquiſition, without their knowing the reaſons that induce them. The Abby *de Rothelin* and M. de Boze can, at leaſt, tell the kind of merit for which they ſought after ſuch or ſuch a book. The reaſons are, ſometimes, frivolous enough; but, however, they know them; inſtead of which, thoſe into whoſe hands theſe books may hereafter fall, will buy them dear, for the ſole reaſon that their firſt poſſeſſor eſteemed them highly.

It is diverting to imagine that there will come a time when people, who know not a word of Latin, will give an exorbitant price for books written in that language; that they will even give an hundred piſtoles for a book, becauſe it is honoured in the catalogue with the epithets ſcarce and ſingular, and, that a great price has been offered for it in a preceding ſale.

I met

I met one day with one of theſe *bibliomanes*, who had juſt paid a great price for a ſcarce book : " Apparently, Sir," ſaid I to him, " it is your intention to get this book re-" printed." " By no means," anſwered he, " it would then be no longer ſcarce, " and thereby loſe its value ; moreover, I " know not if it be worth while." " Ah, " Sir," replied I, " If it deſerves not to be " re-printed, how can it be worth the price " you have given ?"

In ſpeaking of the Abby *de Rothelin*, I find myſelf inſenſibly engaged in treating of the *mania* of books. I know not if what I have juſt remarked may, in time, be of uſe to ſome of my friends, or to people for whom I ought to be moſt intereſted ; be this as it may, I have given my opinion freely, let thoſe who pleaſe benefit by it.

ESSAY XLIV.

ON THE SINGULAR MEMORY AND ERUDITION OF ABBY LONGUERUE, AND OTHER LITERARY ANECDOTES.

I WAS, for ſeveral years, acquainted with a man, much leſs amiable than the Cardinal de Polignac, but famous for his immenſe erudition, founded upon his memory, which was, in truth, aſtoniſhing; this was the Abby *de Longuerue:* he died in 1732, upwards of eighty years of age. In his childhood he appeared a prodigy. Lewis XIV. paſſing by Charleville, the Abby's country, wiſhed to ſee and hear him. He ſeemed to know every thing at an age when other children know ſcarcely any thing. He maintained his reputation to the end of his life. Coming early to Paris, he was conſulted as an oracle on matters of every kind. Although eſteemed a man of much ſenſe, he was never of any academy, but received many compliments upon his memory. I

aſked him how he managed to arrange, and retain in his head, every thing that entered it, and to recollect every thing when wanted. "Sir," anſwered he, "the elements "of every ſcience muſt be learned whilſt "we are young; the firſt principles of "every language, the *a b c*, as I may ſay, "of every kind of knowledge: this is not "difficult in youth, ſo much the leſs ſo, as "it is not neceſſary to penetrate far, and "that ſimple notions are ſufficient: when "once they are acquired every thing we "read places itſelf where it ought to be: "the ſum of acquired knowledge inſenſibly becomes accumulated and perfectly "diſtributed. Therefore," added the Abby, "I have ſtudied nothing, methodically, "almoſt theſe fifty years; but I read ſometimes one book, ſometimes another, and "thoſe in preference which may teach me "ſomething new, or recall to my mind "that which cannot be too much inculcated. It is in this manner I am become "poſſeſſed of the nomenclature of all my "books: my local memory indicates to "me the place in my cabinet, or apartment, "where they are; I am therefore ſure, in "caſe of need, to give clear directions to

"thoſe

" thoſe I ſend to ſeek them; they bring " them to me, and, in this, I find always " the proof of what I have advanced of my " memory."

The Abby *de Longuerue* has, however, found that the memory muſt not be too much relied upon: he wiſhed to make an exertion of it, in which he did not quite ſucceed. In 1718, it was argued with him that nothing was more difficult than to give an hiſtorical deſcription of France, and which ſhould be neither long nor unintereſting: he pretended to be capable of doing it from memory, without conſulting any book, but entirely by the aid of ſome charts, which he was to have before his eyes; and, that he would call to mind the origin and hiſtory of each province, city, and principal place, and the diſtinguiſhed houſes of the kingdom. He began to dictate this deſcription to the Abby Alary, who was then a little boy, the ſon of an apothecary, and thought himſelf very happy to write under his direction: the work appeared in 1719, a volume *in folio*. He read fragments of it in manuſcript and printed detached ſheets, to ſeveral people, who could not ceaſe admiring how ſuch pro-

found reſearches could have come, as from their ſource, without the leaſt difficulty to him. But as ſoon as a few whole copies were publiſhed, it appeared that correct works were not to be compoſed in this manner; many notable errors were found in his hiſtory, beſides bold and hazarded opinions, not ſufficiently eſtabliſhed. The Abby was obliged to take out many leaves, which were faulty, and put in others more perfect; this greatly encreaſed the expences of his edition. I muſt remark, that copies, wherein theſe corrections have not been made, are now ſought after, and God knows why; for the only difference is, that ſome are faulty, and others corrected. Nowithſtanding all this, the Deſcription of France, by the Abby *de Longuerue*, is a good and uſeful book; it is an hiſtory of France by provinces, and, conſequently, written upon an entire new plan. The manner in which all the great fiefs of the crown were formed is related therein, when, and how they became ſubject to the king's authority, and finally united to his domain.

The Abby *de Longuerue* wrote two hiſtories, one of the Cardinal de Richelieu, the other

ether of the Cardinal Mazarine, with two deſcriptions of their adminiſtration. Theſe two fragments remain in manuſcript; what they contain moſt curious are ſome anecdotes, which the Abby learned from people who had lived, and been employed under theſe miniſters. The Abby frequently repeated them to me, ſeveral of which I wrote down. I have alſo made other notes from what he communicated; for, in returning from my viſits to him, I always found ſomething worth remembering and committing to paper. Some of my notes are as follow:

The Abby pretended that our language had made no real progreſs but for fifty years of the ſeventeenth century, from the year 1630 to 1680. It was, however, in this interval that *L'Academie Françoiſe* was eſtabliſhed, the members of which applied themſelves, at firſt, very uſefully, to purify the language. What old expreſſions it has loſt, ſaid the Abby, ought not to be regretted, although ſome of them were deſcriptive and natural, but harſh and ill-ſounding; thoſe ſubſtituted for them, are more ſoft, and render equally well the thought.

But, ſince the year 1680, which may be looked upon as the moſt brilliant epocha of the age of Lewis XIV. what words have we added to the dictionary, except a few, borrowed from the arts, and which are frequently ill applied, and taken in a bad ſenſe? The Abby thought the ſtyle had gained no more, ſince that epocha, than words; but, in this, I do not think he judged right.

The Hiſtory of Don Carlos, ſo well written, by the Abby de St. Real, is certainly romantic. The Abby *de Longuerue* knew a Spaniſh book, which demonſtrated that it was quite the work of fancy; this opinion is, however, founded upon a paſſage of the hiſtory of M. de Thou: but this hiſtorian is as ignorant of what paſſed out of the kingdom, even in his own time, as he is worthy of belief upon all that happened in France, during the ſixteenth century, becauſe he was himſelf a witneſs to part of it, and that his father had a great ſhare in the affairs immediately preceding. There were then no Gazettes, and few ambaſſadors reſiding in the different courts, who kept up a regular correſpondence. M. de Thou was not in a ſituation to diſcover the truth

truth of reports which were ſpread in the kingdom, particularly thoſe relative to the Spaniards, which always appeared to us ſuſpicious, as propagated by our natural enemies.

Meſſieurs de Bouillons had got their genealogy drawn up and printed, with great pomp and magnificence; they had already diſtributed ſeveral copies of it at court: when it was ſpoken of at the king's ſupper, "Sire," ſaid the Prince de Condé, "if we "believe this genealogy, Meſſieurs de Bou- "illon are more noble than we are; for "they make themſelves deſcended from "the firſt Dukes of Aquitaine, who were "ſovereigns, whilſt the grandfather of "Hugh Capet was but a ſimple individual; "but, after all," added the Prince de Condé, "it is not for us to tell them what we "think of it; I am but a younger brother: "it is your duty, Sire, who are the elder." This reflection did not fall to the ground. The next day, the king informing himſelf of this genealogy, ſuppreſſed it, and forbad the ſale, which greatly mortified Meſſieurs de Bouillon.

The Abby *de Longuerue* thought he was certain that the Dutch offered, in 1632, to Lewis XIV. in order to appeaſe him, the ceſſion of every thing on this ſide the Rhine, and which is called Dutch Flanders and Dutch Brabant, and to preſerve nothing more than their ſeven provinces. It was M. de Louvois, and a vain idea of glory, which diſpoſed Lewis XIV. not to be contented with the offer. He was very wrong, and reduced, injudiciouſly, to the eve of ruin, the unhappy republic of Holland, which it was his intereſt to preſerve. By ſecuring to himſelf the propoſed barrier, the king would have taken the ten remaining provinces; and joined them to France, which would have been, to make uſe of a popular expreſſion, giving the fineſt poſſible form to his meadow. Upon this the Abby ſaid that France had three acquiſitions only to make; all belonging to her ancient poſſeſſions, and wiſhing to do more was a folly. Theſe acquiſitions were, firſt the Low Countries, which we ought always to flatter ourſelves the Houſe of Auſtria will ſome day cede to us *to round her own meadow* on the oppoſite ſide. Secondly, Savoy, which we may alſo hope to obtain, in an agreeable manner,

manner, by encreaſing the poſſeſſions of the Duke, on the ſide of Italy, where we riſk nothing in procuring them for him, and putting it out of his power to penetrate into the kingdom. Thirdly, Lorraine, which the Abby was perſuaded we might have whenever we pleaſed. He did not count *Avignon* among the acquiſitions to be made; for, ſaid he, the Pope is no more maſter there than the Biſhop of Straſburg is in Alſace. However, the Abby judged more according to his own opinion, than that of wiſe politicians, that diſtant acquiſitions and poſſeſſions were improper for us. He told me he had known a man who demonſtrated to Colbert, that it was a folly for France to have great poſſeſſions in America, and particularly in the Eaſt-Indies; that it was neceſſary to leave the Engliſh, who have, as we may ſay, but a foot of land in Europe, to make eſtabliſhments in the new world; and to the Dutch, who are nearly in the ſame ſituation, to make conqueſts in Aſia: that, after all, if we had, at ſecond-hand only, what is brought from thoſe countries, we ſhould not be the poorer, becauſe France would find within herſelf, not only every thing of the firſt neceſſity,

ceſſity, but ſtill the means of employing all the arts which ſupport Epicureaniſm and luxury, and bring ſo much money into the kingdom. M. de Colbert, ſaid the Abby, fell into a great paſſion with the man who had ſpoken to him ſo freely, and would never ſee him again; but, becoming angry is not giving an anſwer.

The Cardinal de Richelieu was not a learned man, but he knew well how to do without being ſo: it is ſufficient for a miniſter to encourage and protect the ſciences he is not obliged to poſſeſs, nor even cultivate any of them; but what is extraordinary, the Cardinal thought no more of ſcience than of the learned. He had ſtudied theology a little in his youth, becauſe, being deſtined to the church, it was neceſſary to him; and, to gain eccleſiaſtical preferment, it was neceſſary to be able to maintain a theſis againſt the Calviniſts; the Cardinal had therefore compoſed, or, at leaſt, had aſſiſted in the compoſition of ſome works of this kind, which he got printed with much pomp and magnificence, at the Royal printing-office. He was at the expence of caſting Hebrew, Chaldean, Syrian and

Arabick characters, to make a Polyglot Bible, in the manner of that which did ſo much honour to the Cardinal Ximenes; but he underſtood no language but the French and the Latin; ſcarcely had he read our profane authors: he was ignorant of hiſtory, had no knowledge of antiquity, and knew nothing at all of natural philoſophy nor mathematics; on which account he never recompenſed thoſe who applied themſelves to the ſtudy of theſe ſciences. He let André Duchene, who was certainly the beſt compiler of hiſtory, and who lived during the adminiſtration, or, rather the reign, of the Cardinal, die for want. Neither the accurate ſciences, nor thoſe of nature made any progreſs during his time. He encouraged the arts, but it was to make them ſerve his luxury. He eſtabliſhed an academy of grammar, eloquence, and poetry, in which he has perhaps done a greater ſervice to the nation than he thought at firſt; he did this becauſe he loved poetry, and pretended to write it. Neither ſtudy nor knowledge is neceſſary for this; genius alone is ſufficient; it muſt be acknowledged the Cardinal de Richelieu was not wanting in it, and it was eaſy for him to

ſupply

ſupply the want of habitude in this kind of compoſition, becauſe he had poets at the court, who wiſhed for nothing better than to put rhime and meaſure to his thoughts.

M. Colbert thought very differently: he certainly was not more inſtructed, perhaps even leſs than the Cardinal; but he had zeal enough to encourage all the arts, ſciences, and every kind of talent; he looked upon them as a ſource of honour for his king, and even of profit to France. Fortunately Lewis XIV. was of the ſame opinion; and, although more ignorant than his miniſter, he had more taſte, and was more difficult to deceive, than Colbert. When people's reputation could reach his ears, he never failed to recompenſe them, according to their merit. M. Colbert, incapable of judging for himſelf, in an infinity of circumſtances, choſe guides upon whoſe advice he formed his opinions; but his oracles were not always ſure and impartial: in matters of erudition the Abby Gallois Chapelain was his guide in poetry, and Perrault for all that came within the arts and ſciences. Chapelain, who died before Colbert,

bert, was replaced by the Abby Tallemant.

I once ſaw the Abby *de Longuerue* in a great paſſion, about the abridgments which remain to us of the ancient hiſtorians. I cannot forgive Juſtin for depriving us of the great hiſtory of Pompey. Paul Diane has taken from us that of Feſtus; Florus was near loſing us that of Livy, and Cornelius Nepos the lives of illuſtrious men in Plutarch. I do not remember who it was of the company who anſwered, very ſenſibly, it was not to be wondered that abridgments only remained to us, and great books were loſt. Before the invention of printing theſe were ſo dear to purchaſe, or get copied, that all a man of moderate fortune could do, was to procure abridgments of them; even at preſent, now books are not ſo dear, the fortune of the generality of people, and the dimenſions of their apartments, do not permit them to have voluminous works. But, moreover, is it not doing a ſervice to moſt readers, to put into their hands clear abridgments, methodically, and well compiled, which contain the moſt intereſting facts. It is neceſſary the abbreviator ſhould quote

his authorities; they may then be conſulted in great libraries, wherein all the voluminous works are depoſited. But, if the abridgment be acknowledged an exact one, it ought to be ſufficient for common readers; and great books ſhould be reſerved for thoſe whoſe intereſt it may be to decide upon ſome particular queſtions, which cannot well be thoroughly examined without recurring to the ſource.

The Abby was a good deal acquainted with the illuſtrious Fenelon, Archbiſhop of Cambray. He has always inſiſted that he had more wit than ſcience, and that he was a weak theologian. In attempting to introduce wit and and ſubtlety into his ſyſtem of devotion, he wandered from his ſubject, and ſuffered ſome errors to creep into his work, intituled *Les Maximes des Saints*. M. Boſſuet, his ſecret rival at court, was more learned, a greater theologian, and a more able diſputant. He took advantage of M. Fenelon's *faux-pas* to ruin him; the good Archbiſhop, unprepared for the blow, reſolved to ſubmit to it with a good grace; he was deprived of the cardinal's hat, which had been promiſed him, and to which, it is ſaid,

ſaid, he was even named, *in petto*. In general M. de Fenelon was more mild and amiable in ſociety, and M. Boſſuet more learned, able, and even more dexterous in intrigues.

The Abby had alſo ſeen the Cardinal de Vendome, who was legate in France, the moſt incapable and richeſt of all the legates and cardinals: he became an eccleſiaſtic late in life, and, being a widower, ſome one ſaid, on hearing of his admiſſion into the ſacred college, that it was the firſt college he had ever entered. When he was legate, it was even neceſſary to explain to him what the word legate meant, and what were his powers and functions; but he learned no more of theſe than thoſe to whom he addreſſed himſelf for information were willing he ſhould know. He got his letters regiſtered in the parliament; the Attorney General joined all the reſtrictions he thought proper; it was inſerted he ſhould do nothing but according to the king's good pleaſure, and that his legation ſhould continue no longer than his Majeſty found it agreeable. Theſe were reſtrictions made for all future legates, who are, and will for ever be

be obliged to ſubmit to the ſame clauſes and conditions. Therefore it was a ſtroke of policy in Lewis XIV. to decorate with the title of legate this good Cardinal, who did not hold that office at the expence of the clergy: being rich, he had no need of great abbies, nor epiſcopal or archiepiſcopal ſees, which he was incapable of governing. He did not underſtand the Latin of the parchment and papers laid before him to ſign, and ſpoke French like his mother, and M. de Beaufort his brother, that is to ſay, like the language of the illiterate vulgar: he ſaid *j'allions*, *je venions*, and could never harangue the king, either when he received the cardinal's cap, or when he had an audience as legate.

The Compte de R*** was famous at court for his ſtupidity. The Abby *de Longuerue*, who knew him well, has told me many things of him, independently of thoſe known to all the world; ſuch as that of his never being able to tell which was the capital of the State of Venice; and of his having ſaid he was aſtoniſhed the king expended ſo much money in getting antiques from abroad, whilſt there were ſo many able

able men in France who would make them for him if he pleaſed. The following appears ſo *naive*, frank, and good-natured, that I cannot but relate it. The day M. R*** married Mademoiſelle de *** who was very ugly, but had a deal of wit, "Madame," ſaid he to her, "you are not "pretty, and they ſay I am a fool; let us "mutually overlook our defects, and we ſhall "make the happieſt man and wife in the "world." She conſented to the propoſition, and they lived affectionately together. He was tall, handſome, and well made; their offspring became numerous, and now figures at the court among thoſe of the firſt rank.

The father of the Abby *de Longuerue* ſerved under his friend, the Marſhal Fabert, whom the Abby, when young, had ſometimes ſeen as commander upon the frontiers of Champagne, the Abby's country. Fabert was aſthmatic, and died of a final ſtoppage of reſpiration in the night. The people of Sedan and its environs were perſuaded that the devil had ſtrangled him. However ridiculous and abſurd this opinion may be, it was founded upon the aſtoniſhing for-

tune the Marſhal had made, and upon what he ſaid himſelf, not quite publicly, but to his friends and confidents, who repeated it to others: He believed firmly in judicial aſtrology, and aſſerted he had been previouſly informed of whatever had befallen him. He was the ſon of a bookſeller at Metz, who, however, had arrived at the dignity of maitre echevin, or mayor of the city. The Marſhal was, at firſt, a private ſoldier, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf on ſo many perilous occaſions that he acquired, among his comrades, the reputation of a ſorcerer, who charmed cannon and muſket-balls, and prevented them from touching him. Every action, from which he retired with fortune and honour, procured him additional rank; ſo that at the age of rather more than forty years, he was captain of the guards, and a general officer. He never loſt his firmneſs in whatever ſituation the army or troop he commanded, or his own perſon might be, he had always the *coup d'œil*, juſt and unerring, to judge of the ſtep it was neceſſary he ſhould take, and of the remedy to be applied to any difficulty: in other reſpects he was incapable of forming a regular plan of campaign, as his views were not extenſive; but

but he accompliſhed every commiſſion with which he was charged. There was, probably, ſome policy in his manner of declaring he knew by magic or aſtrology all that was to happen, and, that he was ſure never to fall in battle, or during the war; in fact he lived for ſome years after the peace of the Pyrenees.

The ſoldiers had a convincing proof of his not being invulnerable, for he had a thigh broken at the ſiege of Turin: all the ſurgeons were for cutting it off: M. de Turenne, under whom he ſerved, exhorted him to ſuffer this operation: he anſwered that he would not die by piece-meal, and that death ſhould have him altogether or not at all: he ſmiled at the ſame time, and ſaid he knew he ſhould get well of his wound; he was fortunate enough to do ſo. He never won a pitched battle, but he ſaved, ſeveral times, the king's army, which had been drawn into difficult ſituations: he took Stenay in the preſence of Lewis XIV. who thus made under him his firſt campaign. Another conqueſt, not leſs important was that of the Chateau of Clermont, in Argonne, capital of the little country of the

Clermontois; it was looked upon as impregnable, and the reducing of it is ſtill eſteemed a prodigy. As ſoon as he had taken poſſeſſion of it he ordered it to be raſed, in which he acted judiciouſly, becauſe it was an advanced poſt, which gave entry to the enemy into Champagne. Fabert was generally thought to be one of the moſt honeſt men in the world; his diſintereſtedneſs and modeſty, on ſeveral occaſions, were worthy of ancient Rome. He was not unlearned; he knew, at leaſt, the ancient Greek and Latin hiſtorians, and might have obſerved therein, that the great generals of antiquity had ſometimes made the ſoldiers believe they had to do with gods and dæmons.

The Abby *de Longuerue* knew another marſhal, much leſs eſtimable than Fabert; this was the Marſhal d'Albret de Mioſſens. It was only by making his court to Queen Anne of Auſtria and Cardinal Mazarine, that he had arrived at that dignity, without having ever diſtinguiſhed himſelf in war. He was no more than a ſpurious relation of the Houſe of Albret: but finding himſelf crowned with riches and honours, he had ſet up a falſe pretenſion to a legitimate deſcent

ſcent. He got a certain abby to compoſe him a genealogy, whoſe falſhood was ſo eaſily diſcovered that it was generally laughed at. The Marſhal was a very idle talker; ſome years before his death he took it into his head to be in love with Madame de Cornuel, who lived to a very great age, and to whom many witticiſms are attributed. He courted her for a long time, but, at length, perceiving his aſſiduity was in vain, he ceaſed viſiting her. The lady, who cared little about him, ſaid jocoſely; "In truth "I am ſorry he has left me, for I began to "hearken to him."

I know but few more noble expreſſions, and worthy the age of Lewis XIV. when every body prided themſelves upon being courtiers, than thoſe of M. de Chamillart to M. de Beauvilliers, who was charged from the king to tell him to retire to his eſtate of Etang. The Duke having put on a melancholy countenance, began by aſſuring him that he was extremely ſorry to be the bearer of a very diſagreeable piece of news: "What, Sir," anſwered M. de Chamillart, "is the king ill? Has any thing diſagree-"able happened to the royal family?"

" No, Sir," ſaid the Duke; " That be-
" ing the caſe," replied he, " My fears
" are removed." M. de Beauvilliers then executed his commiſſion, and M. Chamillart retired quietly to Etang, between St. Cloud and Verſailles: he ſurvived Lewis XIV. ſix years, and died in 1721.

The Father Bouhours was amiable in ſociety, ſpoke and wrote with purity, for which reaſon the beſt things he has written are his Remarks upon the French Language; his ſtyle was otherways languid, by paying too much attention to it: his erudition was not great, and his grand defect was want of taſte; but his rage was to write upon that ſubject; ſuch are his *Maniére de Juger les Ouvrages d'Eſprit*, and his *Penſées Ingenieuſes*. He was miſtaken in many articles in the firſt of theſe works, and has introduced ſeveral falſe and bad thoughts into the ſecond; but theſe books would be uſeful, and worth reading, if they had produced nothing but the excellent criticiſm intituled, *Sentiments de Cleante*, by Barbier d'Aucourt. It is not the firſt time that criticiſms of certain books have been found more uſeful than the work itſelf, becauſe they preſcribe rules

rules for taſte. Therefore a journal judiciouſly compoſed, would be of the greateſt utility, becauſe it would not only point out to us good books, and thoſe we ought to read entirely, but the defects of others, and in what they conſiſt.

The Abby *de Longuerue* has left a diſciple whom I ſee frequently, and who is, moreover, one of my intimate friends; this is the Abby Alary: as he will never read what I am going to write, I will give my ſentiments of him without reſerve. He made his way into the world, under the protection and merit of the Abby *de Longuerue*, with whom he paſſed his youth, and wiſhes to make people believe, that, like another Eliſha, that modern Elijah left him his mantle, his wit, and his memory. He does not, however, poſſeſs near ſo much knowledge as his maſter. He was received into the *Academie Francoiſe* in 1723, an honour which the Abby *de Longuerue* had diſdained. In the early infancy of Monſieur le Dauphin, the Abby Alary was appointed preceptor to this prince, that is he was charged with teaching him to read, whilſt the royal infant was yet in the hands of women. How-

ever, when the Dauphin was put under the care of men, the Abby Alary had no part in the learned education of the heir to the crown. I believe ſome ſuſpicions of ambition and intrigue in his character, were prejudicial to him.

The Abby had formed a little eſtabliſhment, the particulars of which being already unknown to many people, will ſoon be forgotten by all the world; they are, however, worthy of being preſerved. His eſtabliſhment was a kind of club, like thoſe in England, or a political ſociety, perfectly free, compoſed of perſons who liked to reaſon upon what paſſed, and could jointly give their opinions without fear of interruption, or any bad conſequences, becauſe they knew each other well, and the perſons admitted to an audience. This ſociety was called the *Entre-ſol*, becauſe the place in which the members aſſembled was an *entre-ſol**, in which the Abby lodged. It was furniſhed with every thing neceſſary; good chairs, a good fire in the winter, and, in ſummer, the

* A floor between the ground and firſt floor, almoſt ſeven feet high.

the windows opened upon a pretty garden. They neither dined nor ſupped there, but drank tea in winter, and lemonade, and refreſhing liquors in ſummer: the Gazettes of France, Holland, and even the Engliſh papers were always upon the table. In a word, it was a genteel coffee-houſe. I went there regularly, and frequently found perſons of diſtinction, who had held ſome of the firſt employs, both at home and abroad. Even M. de Torcy went there ſometimes. This *coterie*, ſo reſpectable in appearance, finiſhed in an unexpected manner. Some differences aroſe between the courts of London and Madrid: Lord Cheſterfield, the Engliſh ambaſſador, finding Cardinal Fleury refractory to the reaſons of his court, thought the nation might be made to underſtand what the miniſter could not be made to comprehend. Having learned that a political club exiſted in the neighbourhood of the Luxembourg, in the apartments of the Abby Alary, he demanded an audience in the *Entre-ſol*, went there, and pleaded the cauſe of the Engliſh againſt the Spaniards, before the members who aſſiſted, who, as it may be ſuppoſed, applauded his eloquence, but decided upon nothing. The Cardinal, informed

ed of this adventure, forbad, in the king's name, the club to aſſemble, and, from that time, the Abby Alary never appeared at court. He lived at home, in tranquillity, and was very aſſiduous in the meetings of the academy, however, without compoſing any work. He had the priory of Gournay-ſur-Marne, a few leagues from Paris: this benefice is pretty good, and the priory-houſe ſtands in a delightful ſituation. The Abby leads there an happy, and even delicious life; with all proper decency, he receives amiable women, to whom he is complaiſant, and who, when he becomes old, will willingly be the ſame to him. In my opinion his manner of living is to be envied.

ESSAY

ESSAY XLV.

ON ABSENCE OF MIND.

HABITUAL Abſence of Mind is a real proof of folly, or, at leaſt, of great inattention. How happens it therefore, that there are people who pride themſelves upon this abſence, and think to aſſume an air of importance and capacity. Inſtead of paying attention to what is ſaid to them, they wiſh to appear taken up with quite another thing: this is, in truth, contemptible. The only pretence ſuch perſons can have is, that their pretended Abſence prevents them from giving immediate anſwers to embarraſſing queſtions; but this is at the expence of their reputation. I like thoſe better who hearken attentively, and reply ſlowly. This was the ancient method of perſons who diſcuſſed important affairs; but it is now no longer in faſhion. French *naiveté* cannot accommodate itſelf to it, and the multiplicity of affairs with which our miniſters are taken up, do not give them ſufficient time It is in Spain, only, where the national gravity permits people to ſpeak and write with circumſpection,

cumſpection, and where men can conſider at leiſure what they have to ſay, or commit to paper. I knew a Spaniſh ambaſſador, in France, who, importuned by queſtions inceſſantly put to him, to which he was required to anſwer immediately, and, finding that even our young nobility ſometimes let ſlip unreaſonable expreſſions, which he would have thought himſelf obliged to animadvert upon, if he had appeared to hear them, took the reſolution of declaring himſelf deaf, and paſſed four or five years at Paris and Verſailles, telling every body he was extremely hard of hearing. By this method he frequently diſſimulated, and made people repeat their queſtions two or three times, which gave him time to prepare his anſwer. Finally, when he had his audience of leave, it was remarked that his ear was very fine, and his artifice was diſcovered when he had no longer occaſion to make uſe of it.

I knew a woman of a certain age, whoſe ſlow, but dignified manner of ſpeaking, even in ordinary converſation, gave her the reputation of a woman of great ſenſe. Every thing ſhe ſaid was looked upon as ſo many ſentences and apophthegms.

ESSAY

ESSAY XLVI.

ON DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

IT is at preſent required of maſters and miſtreſſes of families, not to appear too much taken up with the care of doing the honours of their tables, &c. Nothing appears more ridiculous than to ſee the lady of the houſe torment herſelf, give her keys to ſervants to fetch different things ſhe has in her own particular keeping, which ſhe diſtributes, with circumſpection, on great occaſions; afterwards preſſing people to eat of what ſhe thinks good, as if they had it not in their power to have as good things ſet before them every day. Theſe manners are ſo impolite, provincial, and ruſtical, that they are even baniſhed from the genteel citizen's houſes of Paris, from the provinces and chateaux. A houſe ſhould be ſo well regulated, that by a ſign, or a word, from the maſter or miſtreſs, every thing ſhould be in its place, and the company well ſerved. But if, in the courſe of the day, they ſhould be diſengaged from company, the

the miſtreſs ſhould reſerve to herſelf moments of recollection, in private, with her ſervants, when ſhe ſhould reckon the expences of the preceding day, and give her orders for the preſent and ſucceeding ones; ſhould know what every thing coſts, and what becomes of it. In houſes where maſters and miſtreſſes are too elevated to deſcend to theſe minutiæ, a truſty and faithful ſteward ought to be charged with it; but, as in a well-managed theatre, the machinery and decorations ſhould be ſo well prepared as to make every thing appear at the moment of repreſentation, to be the effect of the ſtroke of a magic wand.

I know a good citizen's houſe, the maſter of which is rich and eaſy, wherein the common order of things is reverſed. The lady commonly charges herſelf with the daily expences; there the contrary is the caſe; the miſtreſs of the houſe prides herſelf upon her wit; and one great means ſhe employs to gain a brilliant reputation is, to give regularly, on certain days, a dinner, on others a ſupper, to thoſe who are reputed to have moſt wit and information. The fortune of her huſband is equal to theſe expences;

pences; he kindly gives into them with a good grace, and is as well pleaſed as the company with the elegance of her taſte. But, although he ſeems not to be intereſted in the diſſertations at which he is preſent, aſks no queſtions, and never ſays a word, I know, from good authority, that he amuſes himſelf with them. How do we know that he does not liſten as a critic; it is certain, that this man, who ſays not a word, except in helping his friends at table, in the moſt polite manner, who ſeems, in the houſe, as an humble friend to the lady, and to give orders about any thing, ſpends all his mornings in regulating the family expences, and writing out the bill of fare for dinner: he ſcolds his ſervants when they fail in the leaſt part of their duty, and preſcribes them preciſe and exact laws for the future; his people tremble before him; he takes the liberty to reprimand his wife, when, by her fault, the expences are too great, or the dinner is not good enough.

There is nothing which a philoſophical obſerver may not turn to advantage; and this gentleman might find in the ſtudy of theſe little domeſtic affairs, an intereſt of conſiderable magnitude.

ESSAY

ESSAY XLVII.

THE EFFECTS OF AMOROUS CONNECTION ON CHARACTER.

AFTER treating in this volume of ſo many different matters and objects, I am now going to ſpeak of love and women: but I will not dwell long upon either of them; for I think, like Madame Cornuel, who ſaid, we cannot be long in love, without doing fooliſh things, nor ſpeak much of it, without ſaying ſilly ones.

It is difficult, in every period of life, to inſpire a real paſſion: but it is eaſy to make moſt women conceive a momentary one; many things contribute to this; a fine figure, the appearance of ſtrength and vigour, the graces, wit, or the reputation of it, complaiſance, and, often, a decided tone, and light manners, ambitious ideas, and, finally, intereſted views; with ſo many reſources, it is almoſt impoſſible that every one ſhould not find means to gratify

his inclinations during his youth; but, in a riper age, it is neceſſary to fix the affections. If we will not renounce every ſpecies of gallantry, it is neceſſary to accuſtom ourſelves early to the ſweet habitude of living with one whom we love and eſteem; without which, we fall into the moſt gloomy apathy, or inſupportable agitation. The habitude of which I ſpeak, is more agreeable and ſolid, when founded upon the permanent affections of the mind; but this is not ſo abſolutely neceſſary as not to be diſpenſed with. It is certain that the cares of a woman are always more agreeable to an old man than thoſe of a relation or friend of his own ſex; it ſeems to be the wiſh and intention of nature that the two ſexes ſhould live and die together.

We become inſenſible of a ſettled habitude; and, as we do not perceive that a miſtreſs grows old, and becomes leſs handſome, we do not obſerve that her way of thinking becomes our own, and our reaſon ſubjected to hers, though ſometimes leſs enlightened. We inſenſibly ſacrifice our fortune to her; and this is a neceſſary conſe-

quence of the reſignation we have made of our reaſon.

Men ſometimes paſs over the infidelities of women, becauſe they are not perfectly convinced of them, and that a blind confidence is a neceſſary conſequence of their ſeduction: but if, unfortunately, they come to the knowledge of them, it is impoſſible for a man, ſincerely attached to a woman, not to be ſuſceptible of jealouſy. This jealouſy takes a tinge of the character of the perſon who is affected with it. The mild man becomes afflicted, falls ill, and dies; if a repentance, which he is always diſpoſed to believe ſincere, does not conſole him: the choleric man breaks out into rage; and, in the firſt moments, it is not known how far this may carry him; but men of this diſpoſition are ſooneſt appeaſed, and moſt frequently to be deceived.

Pecuniary intereſt ſhould never be the baſis of an amorous connection: it renders it ſhameful, or at leaſt ſuſpicious: money, ſays Montaigne, being the ſource of concubinage. But when a tender union is well formed, intereſt, like ſentiment, becomes

common; every thing is mutual; and there is but one fortune for two ſincere lovers. If they be equally honeſt, and incapable of making a bad uſe of it, this is juſt and natural; but frequently the complaiſance of one, makes him or her partake too much of the misfortunes and errors of the other.

Love ſhould never have any thing to do with affairs: it ought to live on pleaſures only: but how is it poſſible to reſiſt the ſolicitations of a beloved object, who, though ſhe ought not to participate in affairs which ſhe has not prudence or courage enough to manage, yet having always, for a pretext, her intereſt in your reputation, welfare and happineſs, how is it poſſible to reſiſt an amiable woman, who attacks with ſuch weapons?

Some ladies have a real, others a borrowed reputation; that of the firſt is pure and unſpotted, founded on the principles of religion, conſequently the only genuine one; it belongs to women really attached to their duty, and who have never failed in the leaſt point of it, whether they have had the good fortune to love their huſbands, who

have returned their affection; or whether, by an effort of virtue, they have been faithful to a man whom they have not loved nor were beloved by. There is another reputation, unknown to religion, which delicate morality, although purely human, does not admit, but which the world, more indulgent, will sometimes accept as good; that founded upon the good choice of lovers, or rather, of a lover, for multiplicity is always indecent. We are so disposed to think that each loves his likeness, that we judge of the character of men and women by those of their own sex with whom they have formed an intimacy; but infinitely more by the persons for whom they conceive a serious attachment. Many a man of wit has established the reputation of his mistress, without composing madrigals for her, but by making known the passion with which she had inspired him; many a woman of merit has created or established the reputation of him whom she has adopted her chevalier. After all, it is more dangerous to solicit than to decline this kind of reputation: it happens more frequently that a man loses himself by making a bad choice, than

than he adds to his fame by making a good one.

If the public are indulgent to the attachments of ſimple individuals, they are much more ſo to thoſe of kings and people in place, when they think them real, and do not ſuſpect in them either ambition, intrigue, or motives of intereſt. All France approved of the love of Charles VII. for Agnes Sorel, becauſe ſhe had the courage to ſay to this Prince that, unleſs he recovered his kingdom, he was not worthy of her affection. The Pariſians applauded the love of Henry IV. for *La Belle Gabrielle*, and ſung with pleaſure the ſongs this monarch made for her; becauſe, knowing her to be handſome, and of a good diſpoſition, they imagined ſhe would inſpire the king with ſentiments of benevolence.

Never did a woman love a man more ſincerely than Madame de la Valliere loved Lewis XIV. She never quitted him but for God alone; and, ſwelled with vanity as that monarch was, he could not complain of this rivality; ſo much the leſs, as the Supreme Being had but the remains of

the heart of his miſtreſs, and, perhaps never poſſeſſed it entirely.

I have heard an anecdote of Madame de Valliere, which I do not remember to have ſeen in print. This lady was ſo modeſt, and had ſo little ambition, that ſhe had never told the king ſhe had a brother, much leſs had ſhe ever aſked any favour for him. He was ſtill young, and had made his firſt campaign among the cadets of the king's houſehold. Lewis XIV reviewing his troops, ſaw his miſtreſs ſmile in a friendly manner at a young man, who, on his part, bowed to her, with an air of familiarity. In the evening the King aſked, in a ſevere and irritated tone of voice, who this young man was. Madame de la Valliere was at firſt confuſed, but afterwards told his Majeſty it was her brother. The King, having aſſured himſelf of it, conferred diſtinguiſhed favours upon the young gentleman, who was father of the firſt Duke de la Valliere, whoſe widow and children are ſtill alive.

The King's intrigue with Madame de Monteſpan, was not of a nature to be approved

proved of ſo much as that he had with Madame de la Valliere; yet the nation did not complain, becauſe it was thought the love of this lady procured the public magnificent feaſts and elegant amuſements. The following verſes were a good deal ſung at that time.

Ah! quelle eſt charmante
Notre aimable cour;
Sous le même tente
On voit tour a tour,

La gloire et l'amour,
Conquête brillante
Et fête gallante
Marquent chaque jour.

On the contrary, the public were a good deal diſguſted with the amours of the King and Madame de Maintenon, although more decent, and that a ſecret marriage had rendered them legitimate. It was obſerved that a love, conceived when both parties were in years, afforded a ridiculous ſpectacle: Moreover, Madame de Maintenon meddled with the affairs of government; and it was when ſhe moſt interfered with them, that things fell into decline, and that Lewis XIV. began to experience misfortunes, which were all laid to her charge.

When the late Duke of Orleans, who was Regent, fell in love with Mademoiſelle de Sery, he was not cenſured on account of it. The Ducheſs of Orleans, natural daughter to the King, was rather beautiful, but ſhe was not amiable; Mademoiſelle de Sery on the contrary, was very much ſo. She had a ſon, and it was predicted of him that he would one day become Duke of Dunois. We ſee him at preſent, in Paris, under the title of Chevalier d'Orleans, Grand Prior of France. He has not fulfilled what was expected of him; yet he has wit, and is, in many reſpects, amiable.

In proceſs of time the Regent fell into ſuch an irregularity of conduct, that the public were ſhocked at it. It was neceſſary for him to have many other brilliant and eſtimable qualities to be pardoned ſo great a defect; but people were ſo much diſpoſed to indulgence for him, that his affection for Madame de Parabere was approved of, becauſe it was ſuppoſed ſhe really loved him, and that he loved her, although he was frequently unfaithful to her.

Exterior

Exterior decency is generally admired, and princes and men of distinction ought to do nothing to disgust the public; but, right or wrong, it is but too true, that in the end, this public assumes the authority of censuring, without delicacy, every fault: woe to them who are the first objects of gross scandal; they become the victims to its rage: the public judges and punishes them for it; or, at least, hoots at, hisses, and despises them; but, when the number of the guilty increase to a certain degree, it is found, that although hisses are sufficient to condemn bad pieces, they are not rods enough for those men who deserve to be lashed: they then become tolerated, nothing more is said, and, what is worse than all, a resolution is sometimes taken to imitate them. It must be acknowledged that the temptation to sin is very great, when we are sure to do it with impunity; and that people are made easy upon this head, when they are sheltered from reproach and ridicule.

ESSAY

ESSAY XLVIII.

ON THE METHOD OF STUDYING, READING, AND SELECTING FROM AUTHORS.

I Return with pleaſure to the favourite ſubject of my reflections, becauſe it is that of my taſte and amuſement; namely, reading and ſtudy. There are two ſorts of them in the cabinet; the one belongs to our profeſſions and functions: therefore the magiſtrate ought to ſtudy the general principles of juriſprudence, and give the greateſt attention to affairs ſubmitted to his deciſion. The miniſter, of whatever kind his adminiſtration may be, ought to ſtudy the principles of the object committed to his care, and apply them as occaſions require. The father of a family is obliged to think of what may ſecure or encreaſe his fortune, to take care of his property, and keep an account with himſelf as well as with others. Theſe are neceſſary ſtudies and occupations, and muſt not be neglected. But there is another kind of ſtudy, merely

ly pleaſurable, free in its object, and which may ſerve as a relaxation from ſerious and neceſſary ones. There are people happy enough not to be obliged to employ themſelves but in ſtudies of that nature. Women, eſpecially, if they be fortunate enough to amuſe themſelves with reading, cannot read too much; by a little method, and a proper choice of books, they will find infinite remedies againſt laſſitude, and abundant ſources of inſtruction.

Life, for a perſon who wiſhes to be virtuous and amiable, is a continual ſtudy. We improve in ſociety by living and converſing with thoſe whoſe converſations and examples are worth hearing and imitating: we learn to diſcover and avoid the ridicule of certain perſons, whom we but too frequently meet with, but with whom we ought to form no connection. However this ſtudy of ſociety cannot fill up all the moments of life; it often experiences forced interruptions, longer than we would wiſh for. It is then we ought to apply ourſelves to ſtudy in ſolitude; that is to ſay, to reading: but we muſt know how to read to advantage; for doing it without method, choice or taſte, is

is a real loſs to the cultivation of the mind; it ſerves, at moſt, to fill up ſome idle moments; and, when we read in this manner, although we may have a good memory, we neither learn nor retain any thing.

For my part, my method of reading with advantage, books of all kinds, foreign to my profeſſion, is as follows. In the firſt place, I recollect the firſt principles of all the ſciences I learned in my youth; afterwards I conſider in which of theſe ſciences I wiſh to gain a more extenſive knowledge; I do not ſeek it in didactic books, in treatiſes made preciſely to inſtruct; ſuch kind of reading would form too profound a ſtudy, and require too much application, in which people who quitted other ſerious ſtudies for it, would find no relaxation: I ſeek for books which contain the hiſtory of each ſcience, the progreſs it has made in different ages, and the rational deductions of authors and artiſts, to whom it owes its progreſs. I am perſuaded, that by this hiſtorical ſtudy alone of the arts and ſciences, a man of the world may learn as much as he wiſhes to know of them, and that a good Encyclopedia might be made by uniting the hiſtory

hiſtory of each ſcience and art, and ſhewing how one derives from the other, and the relations that are between them.

My cuſtom is, with books whoſe ſubjects appear intereſting, to read them over, and then form a general judgment of the work: afterwards, if I think it worth while, I read them a ſecond time, make extracts of the beſt part of their contents, and what appears to me moſt novel, and criticiſe the principal errors into which the author may have fallen. Such is my method with books of ſcience and hiſtory; with reſpect to thoſe of ſimple literature, poems, romances, &c. performances of which we muſt not abſolutely deprive ourſelves, becauſe they are a dernier reſort againſt the fatigue and uniformity of more ſerious books, I make no extracts from them, but content myſelf after reading them over, with writing, in a few words, my opinion upon each, to prevent thoſe who may be tempted to read them after me, the trouble of beginning an author, by whom they would neither be amuſed nor entertained.

There

There are books of a frivolous kind, in which I ſometimes find ſentiments worthy of being ſelected; this is what I do: although the harveſt be not abundant, it is, at leaſt, precious. Nothing is, in my opinion, more inſupportable, than the continued reading of a collection of poems; they cannot be read but at intervals; yet in taking them up frequently, till they are all read, very good things are ſometimes found in them.

I know no other manner of judging theatrical pieces, than by the impreſſion they have made upon me, and I am very careful to avoid examining whether they be according to the rules of the drama: in my opinion, there is but one thing to conſider, whether there be a kind of probability in the intrigue and characters; if the firſt be intereſting and the laſt pleaſing, I think the piece a good one. If it be well written, in verſe or proſe, that is another advantage: but the real merit of the work does not conſiſt therein.

The remarks I have made in reading, compoſe, already, ſeveral great volumes: they

they will not be quite uſeleſs to my ſon, if ever he forms a rational catalogue of his library.

A man, who has not, nor ever will read, muſt, certainly, from his ignorance, be liable to ſpeak abſurdly, for which he will be expoſed to ridicule; knowledge of the world, and the converſation of men of ſenſe, will never ſhelter ſuch a man from raillery: but, on the other hand, a man who has done nothing but read and ſtudied, has no knowledge of the world, and who has never mixed with good company, becomes a ſtupid and unpolite pedant, and ſpeaks abſurdly in another manner; for, as men learn not every thing from books, ſo books cannot ſupply the knowledge of the world. The Abby de Longuerue, whoſe memory and erudition I have ſpoken ſo favourably of, was himſelf an unpolite pedant; we are aſſured that Hugo Grotius, one of the moſt learned men at the beginning of the laſt century, and who was ambaſſador in France, about an hundred years ago, was the worſt ambaſſador in the world. As he was ignorant of cuſtoms, he underſtood nothing of what paſſed at court; he kept company

company with nobody but pedants of the univerſity, who taught him nothing uſeful, and from whom he could not learn the manner in which he ought to conduct himſelf with kings, queens, princes, and miniſters. He went to the worſt of all ſources to ſeek information; but what he gathered, he wrote to the States General in fine Latin, for he could not write either in French or Dutch: both himſelf and his wife were objects of ridicule at the court of France, and nobody read his work, which has ſince been ſo much admired, becauſe it contains excellent maxims of natural and public right: yet it will never be learned from this great work, how we ought to act in negociations: on the contrary, the letters of the Preſident Jeannin, who was a mild and inſinuating man; thoſe of the Cardinal d'Oſſat, a prudent man, who always made reaſon triumphant, without offending anybody; finally, thoſe of the Compte d'Eſtrades, whoſe diſpatches are ſo fine and ſenſible, as well as elegantly written, are real models to be adopted: but none ought to be ſervilely imitated: a public man ſhould form a ſtyle peculiar to himſelf, conformable to the character with which he is inveſted,

inveſted, to the manners of the court from which he is ſent, and to that where he reſides. Nothing ſhould be more avoided in diſpatches than an affectation of wit, but the greateſt attention ſhould be given to expoſe facts in the cleareſt manner to his court. With reſpect to memoirs addreſſed to the court with which he has to treat, there are ſometimes reaſons for theſe being more obſcure and perplexed.

I have always obſerved that men of the robe, employed in foreign affairs, became more amiable and poliſhed; and that, on the contrary, in intendancies, or provincial adminiſtrations, they contracted a ſtupid and impolite manner; the reaſon is not difficult to be conceived; an ambaſſador ſtrives to make himſelf beloved, and the intendant pretends to make himſelf feared: one muſt be a courtier, and has two courts to pleaſe; the other exerciſes the deſpotiſm of a ſingle court upon its ſubjects.

But I am wandering too far from my propoſed object: I meant to ſay, that to write books, equally uſeful and agreeable, a knowledge of the world was preferable to

It is thus, Saint Evremond and Fontenelle have ſucceeded. The latter acknowledged to me one day, that he had left off reading: "I have ſtored my magazine," ſaid he, "a long time ago; at preſent I ſell my "merchandize." But, to arrive at this point, three things are neceſſary; to read and ſtudy methodically, to have a good memory, and, finally, a good ſtock of wit, and a knowledge of the world. Yet we are told Bayle was wanting in the laſt; but he had ſo much wit and information, that, on reading his works, no appearance is ſeen of what he was deficient in. How much muſt this man have have amuſed himſelf in compoſing his Dictionary, and his *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres!* He went from object to object, and judged of every thing with liberty, ſuperiority and eaſe. His Journal is the beſt that has been, or, perhaps, ever will be compoſed. Every book is there ſelected, thoroughly examined, and judged of in a maſterly manner. If we may expect ſuch another Journal, it muſt be the work of a well-compoſed ſociety, directed by an enlightened preſident: whoever ſhould eſtabliſh ſuch a one, would render a great ſervice to ſciences and letters; he would prevent

authors from wandering, teach them how to treat their ſubjects, which, for the moſt part, they are ignorant of, and ſhew them the defects of their compoſitions, as well as thoſe of their ſtyle. Our academies would not do too much by taking this upon themſelves, each according to its province; one company alone would not be ſufficient: and it would ſtill be neceſſary to leave to the *Mercure*, and the little hebdomadal criticiſms, poetry, light literature, and romances. Perhaps there will be, ſome day, found, among my papers, a rational plan of this reformation of the Journals, and reflections upon the extreme utility they might be of, in compoſing an hiſtory of the progreſs of our knowledge; the moſt intereſting of all hiſtories that can be written.

I have a library, rather conſiderable, but it is compoſed of books, all choſen for my own uſe: it is a miſplaced and blameable luxury to have more books than you can read and conſult; yet it is the fineſt, moſt noble, and, conſequently, the moſt excuſeable of all luxuries; I confeſs, if I could enjoy one, it ſhould be this. But it is neceſſary, at leaſt, to know, of what uſe books,

which we read not ourſelves, may be to others: it is both abſurd and ridiculous to have ſuch, whoſe only merit conſiſts in being ſcarce. With reſpect to books which have no other recommendation than the goodneſs of their edition, and the elegance of binding, they are ſtill a luxury; but this is pardonable in thoſe who are rich enough not to miſs acquiring a good book, in the hope of having a handſome one, otherways it would be imitating the man, who, having ruined himſelf in the purchaſe of picture-frames, was too poor to buy paintings.

When a library is limited, its compoſition ſhould beſpeak the profeſſion of its proprietor: it would be ridiculous to find nothing but poems and romances in that of a magiſtrate, and not to find in that of a military man either Polybius, or Cæſar's Commentaries.

Serious ſtudies require, in thoſe who purſue them, an abſolute exemption from all domeſtic concerns. It is on this account that a monaſtic life is the moſt proper for ſtudy, becauſe thoſe who conſecrate themſelves to it are always ſure of wanting for nothing

nothing, either for the moment, or when they ſhall become incapable of labour. From hence it may be concluded, that if ever the Monks be deſtroyed, erudition and inſtruction will ſuffer conſiderably. To this it will be anſwered, that there are many orders of Monks who neither ſtudy, nor apply to any thing; to which may be replied, that government ſhould rather ſtrive to make them uſeful than deſtroy them.

It is a great ſatisfaction to a man who reads and ſtudies, to have a perſon with whom he may reaſon upon what he has read: *ſcire tuum nihil eſt, niſi te ſcire hoc ſciat alta*, ſays a Latin poet; but it is neceſſary to chuſe thoſe with whom you wiſh to reaſon upon what you know and have juſt read; for if, unfortunately, you fall into the hands of talkative cenſors, thoſe eternal diſputers, it would be better never to have begun a communication of ideas in your life, than to have addreſſed yourſelf to ſuch people. If you apply to a fool, the ſatisfaction is ſtill as little. In ſuch unfortunate circumſtances, the beſt way is to keep to yourſelf what you know.

Forced ſtudies are tireſome and fatiguing; on the contrary, thoſe which are voluntary, flow almoſt inſenſibly. I know a woman, who, having been a long time intimately acquainted with a man, wrote to him almoſt every day, even when they were in the ſame town, giving him an account how ſhe ſpent her time; what ſhe had read, and communicating to him her moſt ſecret thoughts. The gentleman died, and his heirs were polite enough to return to the lady all her letters. Being one of my particular friends, ſhe had confidence enough in me to let me read them, and even gave them into my poſſeſſion: I peruſed them with all imaginable pleaſure; they were full of wit, of thoughts and reflections, equally ſenſible and juſt; and were arranged in progreſſive order. I put them together, and they made four volumes in quarto; after this I paid her a viſit, and made her repeat what ſhe had many times ſaid to me, that ſhe could not conceive how it was poſſible to have patience enough to write a book. "Well, Madam," ſaid I, "know "that you have written a conſiderable one, "better than moſt of thoſe we eſteem, "which I have brought for your inſpection."

I put

I put immediately into her hand her four volumes in quarto. "There," ſaid I, "is "ſomething more valuable than the letters "of Madame de Sevigny, and, perhaps, "than the Eſſays of Montagne." She received my compliment modeſtly, and was obliged to acknowledge that it is poſſible to write a book, almoſt without knowing it. I gave her back her four volumes; but, as I am a great tranſcriber of notes and extracts, I copied from different parts of the work, about one volume, which I preſerve as being precious.

Montagne learned Latin without a maſter, at leaſt without rudiments, by habitude and rote. I knew the time when the ſcholars of the Jeſuits college were obliged to ſpeak Latin to the ſervants about them, when they aſked for the moſt common neceſſaries. The Latin, ſpoken on thoſe occaſions, was certainly bad; it was called *kitchen Latin:* but, ſuch as it was, it created an habitude of ſpeaking that language. This cuſtom has ſince been left off; it was pretended that it ſerved only to accuſtom the children to make ſoleciſms. I have, however, found it uſeful to thoſe who, travelling in Ger-

many, Hungary, Bohemia, and Poland, ſtood in need of Latin to make themſelves underſtood. The habitude they had contracted when young, helped them over many difficulties, whilſt thoſe who go from college at preſent, are puzzled with them, although they have made Latin verſions, themes and poetry, and have even gained premiums. As for Greek, it is uſeleſs to think of ſpeaking, or underſtanding it with accuracy. You may know their ſentiments without tranſlating books from this dead language, becauſe it is already done. But it is neceſſary, at leaſt, to know how to read Greek, to poſſeſs the firſt elements of the grammar, and eſpecially the Greek roots, upon which Meſſieurs de Port Royal have written an excellent work. It is incredible how uſeful the knowledge of the Greek roots is in learning the etymology of moſt terms of arts and ſcience. If our language, in its firſt barbarous ſimplicity, be not derived from the Greek, it muſt, at leaſt, be acknowledged that two thirds of the words we make uſe of at preſent, come therefrom, either directly or indirectly.

There

There are didactic books ſo tireſome and diſagreeable, although very exact, that they may juſtly be called determents from ſtudy, as we ſay old and ugly women are antidotes to love. Young people ſhould be ſpared the fatigue of ſuch books, by ſubſtituting others, which inſpire curioſity and deſire. To intereſt the reader is the great art every author of a book ſhould ſtudy. It ought to be the end and object of him who writes upon ſcience, of the hiſtorian, the inventor of romances, and the writer of comedies. But this is not all, it muſt be kept up to the end of the work: *hoc opus, hic labor eſt.*

People to whom I have communicated my extracts, and ſome of my remarks upon different objects, have reproached me with not having a *ſtyle of my own*; to which I anſwer, what ſignifies it, if I have the ſtyle of the ſubject to which my attention is directed? it is principally to this ſtyle one ought to be attached. In writing upon every kind of ſubject, it is neceſſary to obſerve what an author of a comedy is particularly attentive to, giving each perſonage the language proper to him; and the moſt eſſential of all is clearneſs of expreſſion, and juſtneſs of thought.

It

It muſt not be believed that imagination extends the ideas, it is the judgment; becauſe this either elevates itſelf, or deſcends, in a right line, from conſequence to conſequence; whereas the imagination moves by fits and ſtarts, and wanders, for want of attaching itſelf to a fixed object.

There are two manners of cultivating the memory; one is by learning by heart, long paſſages from poems, entire harangues, and pages of cyphers: with this kind of memory wonderful exertions are made, but very uſeleſs ones: I call the other kind of memory, *by judgment.* By this ſort of memory we retain the ſenſe and order of things; if this be not a real memory, it is ſurely a good one; and by which we are beſt inſtructed. It applies to what we have ſeen and read, and fatigues leſs than the firſt, for we retain every thing without perceiving it, and, as it were, without wiſhing to do it.

Men of great genius have no need of reading to conceive grand and fine ideas, and to form projects and plans not only brilliant, but ſometimes very good and uſeful. Yet reading

reading is ſtill of great ſervice to them, to rectify their thoughts, and ſhew them, by the example of thoſe who have had ſome of the ſame kind, to what inconveniencies they would be expoſed by purſuing them with too much ardour and precipitation. It has long ſince been ſaid, that hiſtory has anticipated experience; that experience is neceſſary to thoſe who might conceive projects too vaſt, and be carried too far by their ideas.

The epiſtolary ſtyle is that moſt neceſſary for women. Thoſe who are diſpoſed to write well in this way, have no need of taking pains to ſucceed. They muſt even take care not to loſe that eaſy, natural, and rather ſoft turn, ſometimes witty, ſometimes voluptuous, which is truly the ſtyle of women. As a lady muſt have neither an appearance or a manner too maſculine, a look too bold, or her head too elevated, ſo her ideas and expreſſions muſt not be too aſpiring, nor her ſtyle what is called lofty; it muſt always appear as if ſhe wrote rapidly, and her phraſes ſhould not be overcharged. I do not believe there are any women who, after having written a work

or

ſeries of letters, ever gave them to be corrected by ſome confidential male or female friend, whom they thought capable of writing better than themſelves. It is either neceſſary to entruſt to a ſecretary the compoſition of a whole work, or that the author, himſelf, ſhould reviſe what he has done, and, after having corrected the firſt rough draught, look it over again, rectify, and give it the laſt touches; otherwiſe he will run the riſk of giving the work to the public in a patched ſtyle, which will evidently appear to be by two different hands.

The ſtyle of Voiture, which was formerly in great reputation, is now juſtly decried. He is a buffoon, who has ſome wit, but without elevation or juſtneſs. Balſac, on the contrary, whoſe ſtyle is equally antiquated, had an elevation of idea and expreſſion. People who know how to make the moſt of every thing, might ſtill profit from Balſac, by ſome thoughts and turns of phraſes. But, I muſt again repeat, that the beſt rule for ſtyle is to adapt it to the ſubject upon which we have to treat. I read with pleaſure the letters of a celebrated Intendant of the late reign; his name was Bagnols; they

they were juſtly looked upon as true models for correſpondence in public affairs. They were ſhort, without the leaſt dryneſs, and were clear and nervous. A ſtupid ſubaltern could not miſtake the orders the Intendant gave, nor refuſe to conform to them; and, a better proof is, a man of ſenſe could not fail to admire them, and be convinced by the reaſons they contained; for he never gave an order without aſſigning a reaſon.

I now return to memory, to ſpeak of thoſe who have none at all. There are people who, to aid the little they are poſſeſſed of, are obliged to make an *agenda* of every thing they have to carry into execution. A certain Intendant of Tours, who lived at the beginning of the preſent century, was famous for this. His *agenda* was frequently ſtolen from him, and read, and laughed at in his preſence. There was found written in one of them: "I have taken a reſolution "to ſhave myſelf in future, becauſe my "ſervants are butchers, who flay me." And, a little lower down, "I will ſay "God's death no more, this is an improper "expreſſion for a magiſtrate and an intend-"ant; it is better to ſay dog's death."

M. * * *

M. *** was not, however, quite ſo ſingular in his memorandums of this kind, as a man, who went frequently from Paris to Lyons, and who wrote in his *agenda*, "to remember to be married in paſſing by Nevers."

Notwithſtanding all I have juſt ſaid againſt *agenda*, I make uſe of them ſometimes to advantage; it is not that I want memory, but I have not one exact enough to remember, at the appointed times, all I have to do in the day. This kind of memory is very rare; *agenda* ſupplies the want of it; but I never think of committing to paper my reſolutions and rules of conduct. I know a very learned man, and of great application, who makes very uſeful reſearches, and reduces them wonderfully to order, with the pen in his hand; but the poor man has neither wit nor memory. I have learned from this oddity a very ſingular circumſtance: A man of quality wiſhed to have his genealogy; he applied to the perſon of whom I have juſt ſpoken, knowing him to be learned, exact, and fond of employing himſelf in that way. M. B*** did him this ſervice with the greateſt pleaſure; he turned over hiſtorians and genealogiſts, made

made extracts from ſome old titles, and took copies of them; finally, after ſix weeks' labour, he gave every eclairciſſement required. Two years afterwards, a man of the ſame family, but of another branch of it, not far removed from the former, not knowing who had drawn up the genealogy of his couſin, begged M. B*** to make him one alſo. The good man ſet to work immediately, and found the ſame proofs, but without recollecting any thing more than to have had occaſion to read the ſame papers, but when, and for why, he had forgot. The two couſins having communicated to each other their genealogies, found them alike, mentioned reſpectively the author, and found him to be the ſame man.

I have read, in an eulogium of the Abby de Louvois, that he was brought up, according to the wiſhes of his father, who was then high in power, and neglected nothing to make his ſon an able man. The moſt learned people deviſed methods on purpoſe to teach him every thing in a ſhort ſpace of time. "He was fed," ſays his panegyriſt, "with the elixir and quinteſ-"ſence of every kind of ſcience, as the "richeſt

" richeſt and moſt delicate are with ſtrong " broths, juices of meat, and eſſences of " the beſt fruits." The compariſon is a good one; but, as good ſtomachs are neceſſary to thoſe who are fond of ſuch rich cookery, to digeſt all the aliments, reduced to ſmall quantities, ſo it requires a well organiſed head to retain the principles of all the ſciences, reduced to abridgment. But the perſon in whom this firſt education has ſucceeded, need give himſelf no more trouble for the reſt of his life, to become the moſt learned man in the world: every thing conveys to him inſtruction, encreaſes the maſs of his knowledge, and fixes itſelf upon a baſis already eſtabliſhed in his head; he cannot hold a new converſation, nor open a book, without finding a new ſource of information. It is, perhaps, in this manner, that people at court, appear to know, and really do know *every thing*, without, ſeemingly, *ever having learned any thing*.

The Engliſh have very little ſtyle, and ſtill leſs method; but they have ſtrong and elevated thoughts: accuſtomed to overlook prejudices in matters of policy and government, their daring genius is the ſame in every

every reſpect. Their pleaſantries are neither mild nor cautious; their ſatire is violent, but ſometimes very delightful. We are already acquainted with Dean Swift, one of their moſt ingenious and ſatirical authors. His work is well enough tranſlated into French. It is generally more eaſy to render Engliſh pleaſantries into other languages, than to tranſlate, for inſtance, Italian ones into French, and ours into any language whatſoever, becauſe Engliſh ſatire falls upon things, and the perſons are well deſcribed, and in very ſtriking colours; whereas the Italians play upon words, and the French flutter round the object at which they laugh; they joke and play with it as a cat does with a mouſe; conſequently theſe pleaſantries are very difficult to underſtand and render. Nothing can be better written, or more agreeable to read, than the papers of the Spectator. If the Engliſh had many like this, we could not be too anxious to become acquainted with them: but I foreſee that we ſhall have many bad tranſlations of this firſt and excellent Engliſh author; that from hence a new taſte of literature will be eſtabliſhed among us; that the French, who never know how to check their enthu-

ſiaſm, will *Angliſy* themſelves, and that we ſhall loſe many of our graces in acquiring ſome of their ſpirit, ideas, and liberty of thinking and writing. Voltaire has already ſaid, that when men think forcibly, they expreſs themſelves forcibly alſo; this is true; but ſtrength of thought may be carried too far, and become equally rude and diſguſting in ideas and ſtyle.

ESSAY XLIX.

ON THE LITERARY CHARACTER OF VOLTAIRE.

VOLTAIRE, with whom I have always aſſociated, ſince we were together at college; whom I love perſonally, and eſteem in many reſpects, is not only a great and harmonious verſifier, but, what every body does not know as well as I do, a great thinker. His abode in England elevated his ſoul, and ſtrengthened his ideas: he is capable of publiſhing them courageouſly, having the ſame ſtrength of mind which ſome authors have had, who dared to publiſh what nobody before dared to write: moreover he has a gracefulneſs of ſtyle, ſufficient to expreſs and make pleaſing certain ideas, which would diſguſt, were they rendered by any other perſon. The heroic trumpet, which he put to his mouth in the Henriade, became an agreeable pipe in ſome of his fugitive pieces. It is not uniform,

but he knew how to vary its tone; perhaps all he wants as a poet, is imagination; but this is, at preſent, very difficult to have, there have been ſo many people full of it, that whoſoever would produce any thing quite new, would create ridiculous and frightful monſters. There are two parts in tragedy, intrigue, and that of detail and verſification. Voltaire does not triumph in the firſt, but he is ſuperior in the ſecond; and a proof that this is the principal one is, the difference between the ſucceſs of his theatrical pieces, and thoſe of other authors, ſuch as la Grange Chancel, who excels in all the fable of his tragedies, but which are pitifully written. *Voltaire*, in details, is neither ſo great as Corneille, or ſo tender and amiable as Racine; perhaps he is not even equal to Crebillon; but ſtrokes of wit, and delightful poetry, are ſo frequent in his pieces, that the ſpectator or reader has not time to examine whether any thing better might be produced. The proſe of *Voltaire* is fully equal to his verſes, and he ſpeaks as well as he writes. Nothing can be more clear than his phraſes, they are contracted without ſtiffneſs; no unnatural period, nor rhetorical figure; all his

his adjectives agree with their ſubſtantives: finally, his proſe is a model which his cotemporaries ſtrive always to imitate, without wiſhing to acknowledge it. His Hiſtory of Charles XII. may have ſome defects, conſidered as an hiſtory; his *Lettres Philoſophiques*, contain bold thoughts and criticiſms, which certainly are not always juſt; but his ſtyle is admirable. *Voltaire* is only forty years of age; if he lives to be old, he will write a great deal more, and be the author of works upon which much will be to be ſaid both for and againſt. Heaven grant that the magic of his ſtyle may not give credit to falſe opinions and dangerous ideas; that he may not diſhonour this charming ſtyle, in proſe and in verſe, by applying it to works whoſe ſubjects may be unworthy of the painter and the colouring; that this great writer may not produce a multitude of bad copyiſts; and that he may not become the chief of a ſect, to which it will happen, as to many others, that the diſciples will miſtake the intention of their patriarch.

ESSAY

ESSAY L.

THE DECLAMATION OF THE ACTORS OF THE THEATRE FRANCOIS DEFENDED.

I HAVE frequently heard the Actors of the Theatre Francois reproached with their finging manner of ſpeaking; this reproach is, in my opinion, ill founded. What is declamation, eſpecially in verſe, if it be not finging? There is no harm in finging poetry, or animated proſe, which is cadenced, and ought to be harmonious; but the finging muſt be juſt, and conformable to the true ſenſe of the words: I do not ſpeak of little comedies in proſe; they ought to begin in the tone of converſation. But as kings, princeſſes, generals of armies, or men of the world, ſpeak not in verſe, eſpecially in rhime, tragic verſe muſt be declaimed with animation and cadence. The Roman orators pronounced their diſcourſes in the forum, with a flute accompa-

nyment, which regulated and modulated their tones; ſo muſical ſcenes ought to be nothing more than a fine noted declamation, and better ſupported by an accompanyment, well adapted to the ſenſe of the words and ſituation of the actors. Even the ſymphonies, executed in the orcheſtra, ought to have a ſubject, which is, I believe, called a motive, to ſignify and indicate ſomething. It is alſo neceſſary that the muſic of a ſcene in French ſhould be compoſed for words written in that language, without which it varies from the ſenſe and object. Lulli, although a foreigner, was careful to conſult on this head, all the authors of the words of his operas; and it is perhaps owing to this, that ſome ſcenes of their dramas, being well rendered and ſung, intereſt us ſo much. Deſtouches and Campra were equally attentive in this particular; it appears that Rameau, a new compoſer, very eſtimable, learned and agreeable, in other reſpects, neglects it, in which he does very wrong; he ſpoils the repreſentation, and makes it unnatural. Our muſic ſtill retains ſomething of the age of Lewis XIV. it is noble and expreſſive; let us not render it unnatural, or — upon reflection,

do

do — Gentlemen, do with it as you pleaſe. After all, it is well worth while to diſpute about, to diſcuſs a thing, upon which every perſon ought to decide according to its effect, and the ſenſation it gives him; in this caſe it may well be ſaid, that we muſt not diſpute upon taſte. I have juſt declared mine in muſic, and eſpecially in lyric ſcenes; but let every one judge of it in his own way, and feel ſuch ſenſations as are moſt agreeable to himſelf. It is, at moſt, for men of the art to diſcuſs the principles from whence theſe ſenſations reſult: it is ſufficient for the generality of mankind to feel them.

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